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THE CHRISTIAN'S
ALTERNATIVE TO WAR

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An Examination of Christian Pacifism

BY

LEYTON RICHARDS

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

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TO
ALL IN EVERY LAND
WHO BELIEVE IN AND WORK FOR
WORLD-PEACE

PREFACE

THIS short book has been undertaken at the earnest solicitation of friends in England and America with whom I have frequently discussed questions of war and peace. I have no special fitness by training or native equipment to make the written word my medium of thought: speech rather than print is my natural and readiest form of expression. But I happen, as will appear, both by inheritance and experience, to have been thrust into contact with the problem about which this book is written, and this must be my apology and qualification (such as it is) for trying to reach a wider public than can be touched by the spoken word. A brief statement, therefore, as to what that qualification is may well serve to introduce the book.

I have to go back to early boyhood to find the genesis of those ideas of peace which I hold to-day as an integral part of my faith in the Christian Gospel. I suppose most men derive the best that is in them from the mother who trained them out of infancy into childhood. This is certainly so in my own case, for I had a mother whose early contact with the Society of Friends gave her a passion for peace, and without in any way forcing her passion upon her children she led them to feel with her that peace was one of the leading causes to which any man or woman might devote

the best of his or her energy. My father fully shared this conviction, and from my early years both my parents were the companions and guides of their children.

Before I was ten my parents emigrated from England to the Middle West of America, and there I and my brothers were put to school with the children of native Americans, as well as with the children of Norwegians, Germans, Italians, Swedes, and a few Negroes. To the child, race-consciousness does not exist; it is the outcome of experience, prejudice, or conflicting interests arising from the contacts or conflicts of civilisation; and consequently my parents were not slow to make their boys feel that the foreigner was not necessarily a potential enemy but always an actual friend. I have vivid recollections of the celebration of George Washington's birthday at the school which we attended, when little Johnny Bull, along with little Europeans and little Americans, waved a little Stars and Stripes and chanted a little ditty extolling the virtues of the first great American. All this liberated my mind from the restrictions of purely national frontiers, and so both by upbringing and experience I found, when I came in my later teens to years of independent thought, and when university life in Glasgow and Oxford brought mind against mind, that I shared the recoil of the average Quaker from the very idea of war, and my parents' passion for peace was effectively grafted into the mind of their son.

That passion, however, was not definitely related

to my Christian faith until the issue became a personal one many years later. This happened in Australia, where I had been called as minister to the Collins Street Independent Church, in the city of Melbourne; for there I found in operation a system of "boy conscription" (see note, p. 14) whereby every boy between the ages of twelve and fourteen is compulsorily enrolled in a cadet corps, while still at school; from fourteen to eighteen he becomes a "senior cadet," with the legal obligation of doing sixteen days' military drill a year; and from eighteen to twenty-six he is a member of the "citizen forces," with a further obligation to attend an annual military camp. This system of conscription was in vogue without any adequate conscience clause for the relief of those who, like the Quakers and others, feel that military service is a denial of their Christian loyalty. Consequently, the sons of these people were torn from their homes, tried in batches of fifty with other delinquents, and committed to prison-forts under military control for periods of from twenty to thirty days. Moreover, this did not happen once and for all, but was repeated annually as year by year the boys refused to conform to the legal demands of the army authorities. It is only fair to say that such boys were a handful in point of numbers, but a moral principle is not invalidated because there are only a few who recognise it. What mother would like to see such things happen to her boy, whom she had trained to be a lover of peace? Then what could a Christian minister do but ask

the Church which he tried to serve to stand by and with her persecuted children against this oppression of Christian conscience by the State?

Later, in South Africa, I saw the graves of British soldiers which line the railway as it climbs its 5000 feet through Natal to the high veldt at Majuba Hill, and I learnt something of the aftermath of bitterness which follows in the wake of war, despite the healing and courageous wisdom of the Act of Union by which South Africa became a Dominion within the British Empire. There on the Matoppo Hills in Rhodesia was Cecil Rhodes' last resting-place, and, hard by, the memorial to Captain Wilson and his brave men ambushed in war by the Matabeles, who hated the white man—not without reason—and sought to drive him whence he came. And then, by contrast, an old man in Khama's country who loved the white man because he once had known and loved David Livingstone.

It was with this experience of the military machine, and with this memory of the contrast between the military way and the Christian way that I settled in England, at Bowdon, near Manchester, a month after the war began, in September 1914. It was in week-by-week preparation for the pulpit of that Church, assisted by the forbearance of those to whom I preached, and encouraged by the companionship and help of my wife, that my thoughts and feelings took much of the form in which they appear in this book. Preacher and Church parted company by mutual consent for three of the dark years of war,

and it was during that period that I touched at first hand many of the events recorded in the chapters on "The Nature of War." The impact, however, of all the desperate happenings of that nightmare period of 1914-18 merely strengthened and deepened the convictions already formed concerning war and its legitimacy from a Christian standpoint. So far as England was concerned, there was never a finer moral justification for war than that which led the youth of this country to enlist in their hundred-thousands as soon as it was known that German armies had ruthlessly torn up a treaty, and carried fire and rapine through the countryside of Belgium. The instinctive response of high-souled men to the need of the weak and the helpless immediately transformed what had been a diplomatic wrangle among European statesmen into a great popular crusade for liberty and international decency; and so, with the motives impelling men to war in those days no Christian, were he pacifist or not, could possibly be at variance. The tragedy of the situation lay in the fact that among enemies and allies alike the same convictions as to the rectitude and moral necessity of war drove young men everywhere to give willingly of their all upon the battle-field. As we study the diplomatic documents relating to the origins of the war we may come to various conclusions as to where the prime war-guilt lay, but at least one thing is clear, and that is that the guilt of precipitating war did not lie anywhere with the *peoples* who were called upon to fight, but somehow and

somewhere with the bungling diplomacy and the cross-currents of selfish national interests, which created the situation and made war inevitable.

That, in brief, is the experience which lies behind this book. In a way not given to many my public life for many years has centred about the menace of militarism: I have learnt to know it, its merits as well as its defects; and best of all, I have come to respect and admire many of the men involved in its toils. If, therefore, at times I condemn the works of war in terms that seem to some too strong, the condemnation is not of the men but of the system whose victims and agents they are. For through much strife of soul and mental battle, one conviction has been burnt into my being, namely this—the burden of militarism and the menace of war can only be overcome as the peoples are made ready to follow “Christ’s bleeding feet, toiling up new Calvarys ever with the Cross which turns not back.” By that conviction I stand, and to commend that conviction I write.

I have to make grateful acknowledgment to the Editor of the *Christian Century* of Chicago for permission to incorporate in this book portions of an article written by me, and also the quotation from the Canadian soldier in Chapter IV. To Dr Henry T. Hodgkin, Prof. W. F. Halliday, Dr W. E. Orchard, and other associates in common work and common thought I owe much stimulus and inspiration which can never be acknowledged in detail. But my chief debt in the actual preparation of this book is to Professor Nathaniel

Micklem: much of it has been written in a room which he placed at my disposal in Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario. There, overlooking the blue waters of the St Lawrence with its Thousand Islands, it has been possible to contemplate the reality of a warless world: the inspired wisdom of Richard Rush, the Philadelphia Quaker, and Sir Charles Bagot, the British Ambassador in Washington and afterwards Governor of Canada, has made the United States-Canadian boundary the safest international line in all the world; for by the treaty of 1817 (known as the Rush-Bagot Agreement) there is neither battleship nor fort nor military post along the whole of the 4000-mile land and lake frontier which separates the two countries. President Harding, in a speech on Canadian soil in 1923, drew attention to that fact in words which deserve a wide publicity: the words are carved in granite upon a monument in Stanley Park, Vancouver, erected on the spot where the President spoke. "What an object-lesson of Peace," he said, "is shown to-day by our two countries, to all the world. No grim-faced fortifications mark our frontiers; no huge battleships patrol our dividing waters; no stealthy spies lurk in our border hamlets. Only a scrap of paper recording hardly more than a simple understanding safeguards lives and properties on the great Lakes, and only humble mile-posts mark the inviolable boundary-line for thousands of miles through farm and forest. Our protection is in our fraternity, our armour is our faith, the tie that binds more firmly year by year

is ever-increasing acquaintance and comradeship through interchange of citizens; and the compact is not of perishable parchment, but of fair and honourable dealing which God grant shall continue for all time."

In that international situation is a happy forecast and guarantee of man's ability, if only he will exercise it, to outlaw war from the face of all the earth. In surroundings which suggested such a consummation the scheme of the book was plotted with Professor Micklem's help and advice, and at innumerable points his criticism of the manuscript has been of value.

I must not close this Preface without expressing my gratitude to the Church at Carrs Lane, Birmingham, for giving me the leisure from pastoral charge—by exchange of pulpits with Dr Richard Roberts of the Sherbourne United Church in Toronto—by which alone I have been enabled to fulfil this task.

LEYTON RICHARDS

BIRMINGHAM, 1928

Note.—In November 1929 the Australian Government suspended the operation of Boy Conscription in the Commonwealth, and promised at an early date the repeal of the compulsory clauses of the Defence Act.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S ALTERNATIVE TO WAR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE late Lord Bryce declared shortly before his death that Civilisation must destroy War or War would destroy Civilisation. Thinking men and women to-day know quite well that such a statement is no mere extravagance, for since the close of the World-War in 1918 the resources and ingenuities of science—mechanical, chemical, even bacteriological—have been developed to such a degree and with such amazing rapidity that another clash of arms on a scale like that of 1914–1918 must inevitably mean not the conquest of one group of belligerents by another but the mutual destruction of both, their common submergence in a common ruin. There are still those who tell us that such predictions are unduly alarmist, and that the prophet who utters them is playing the rôle of the fat boy in *Pickwick*, in trying to “make our flesh creep.” But the predictions are not the ignorant forecasts of idealists bent on proving their case: they are the sober and considered statements of men who may be supposed to know, for generals and admirals join to-day with statesmen and publicists in warning

us against the fatal consequences of a "next war." The strange thing is that with this first-hand knowledge behind them, responsible statesmen can be found who will even for a moment contemplate recourse to war as an instrument of policy: yet such is the case: age-long traditions and the instinctive reactions of patriotic feeling are not discarded over-night, and these traditions and reactions and feelings are still strong enough to inhibit the rational judgment of normally sane and far-seeing men when an international crisis of the first magnitude arises. It is this fact which leads to the insanity of competitive armaments in the modern world, and which makes war an ever-present possibility.

Yet inasmuch as ignorance is one of the factors which induce men to contemplate war with equanimity, it may be as well to indicate the kind of evidence to which military and other authorities point in support of their dire predictions of disaster. Thus, Major Victor Lefebure, speaking on "Chemical Warfare" at the Royal United Services Institution, London, after giving technical details as to the concentration and diffusion of gases, said "this indicates the amazing ease with which a surprise aircraft attack, in which even 90 per cent. of the planes are brought down, can introduce chaos and terror." He then went on to describe how gases would be used in conjunction, one to produce wounds and the other to enter them, thus poisoning the blood and killing the victim: in that way, he proceeded, "such precautionary devices as gas-masks would

be rendered useless, and so far no satisfactory protection had been found for irritant gases, such as mustard-gas. . . . Methods of attack are much more easily devised than methods of defence in chemical warfare.”¹

Major-General Swinton² says, “The final form of human strife, as I regard it, is germ warfare: I think it will come to that”; and then he gives this piece of sage and humane advice to the military cadet: “Study the waging of War on a wholesale scale instead of thinking so much about methods which will kill individuals one at a time.” In plain language, that means infecting the water-supply of your enemy with typhoid germs and letting loose armies of rats laden with the bacilli of bubonic plague! When, therefore, the average citizen thinks of war in terms of a military parade, with bands and nodding plumes and colourful uniforms, he is living in a fool’s paradise.

Mr Winston Churchill has told us that “when all was over (in the World-War), torture and cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilised, scientific, Christian States had been able to deny themselves; and these were of doubtful utility.”³ Or to quote General Swinton again: “We have since the War discovered and developed germs which, dropped down upon cities and armies, will slaughter a nation in a day.” Other countries than Great Britain are contributing to the destructiveness of modern war. Thus,

¹ *Birmingham Post*, 9th February 1928.

² Quoted by Will Irwin in *The Next War*.

³ *The World Crisis*, by Winston Churchill.

to quote a single instance, General D. B. Bradner, Chief of the Chemical Research Section of the United States Army, has said: "The Chemical Warfare Service has discovered a liquid approximately three drops of which, when applied to any part of the skin, will cause a man's death: one plane carrying two tons of the liquid could cover an area 100 feet wide by seven miles long in one trip, and could deposit material to kill every man in that area." No wonder that when Mr Thomas A. Edison, the scientist and inventor, was asked, "Is it true that practically the entire population of London could be killed by gas within twelve hours?" he replied, "No, it is not true; the thing could be done in three hours!" America has now sufficiently perfected an aerial torpedo, weighing one or two tons, which is self-propelled for a hundred miles, guided by an invisible airman twenty thousand feet up in the blue, and when over the objective, released, to fall with deadly accuracy, and destroy a whole section of a teeming city.¹ If we would envisage modern war, we have to imagine heavier-than-air gases penetrating into the deepest dugouts and "funk-holes" into which the population has retired: the tubes of London would be a trap and not a refuge in another war: we must think of high explosives which would shatter not merely a building but a whole section of a city, and we must have in mind mechanical and electrical and chemical equipment which would not merely compel the populace to a surrender but would obliterate both

¹ Quoted from Sherwood Eddy in *The Case against War*.

the populace and its city, and in a far more thorough sense than the Roman historian ever surmised, would "create a solitude and call it peace!"

Facts like these make it clear that even the most prosaic prudential considerations point to "peace-at-any-price" as a policy of elementary common sense; for the suicidal processes of war always exact a price greater than any conceivable advantage. But to the credit of human nature it has to be said that prudence and common sense can never weigh in the scale against the passion which ventures all for some great end, or for some love which seizes and inspires the heart. So it comes to be that prudence is flung to the winds when patriotism calls, and if the need be urgent enough, men will sacrifice all they normally hold most dear for a cause which they feel to be supreme. This is the passion which still makes war a possibility in the modern world, and no approach to the problem can be effective which does not take this fact into account: the problem of war touches politics, and economics, and social ethics, and touches them intimately; but fundamentally the impulses which make for war are psychological, they concern the spirit of man, the essential make-up of human nature, and the problem therefore can only be met as these impulses are redirected to ends that are bigger and worthier than the nobilities which from time to time lead even good men to engage in or to endorse the act of war. It is a commonplace to say that all Religion is anthropomorphic: man

"makes God in his own image": the suggestion of Xenophanes that an ox would worship a deified member of its own kind is true to the history of religious experience, and Christianity builds on this native human fact when it presents the Person of God in terms of an actual and historic human life, wrought out in the Carpenter's shop at Nazareth and on the hillsides of Galilee, and surrendered on the Cross of Calvary. But this anthropomorphism is true of the evil in human nature as of the good. John Milton, for instance, in his classic picture of Satan, projects certain elements in human nature into the personality of the Prince of Darkness. Indeed his anthropomorphism here is truer to spiritual fact in many respects than it is when it presents the Person of the Almighty; and it is for this reason that, despite Milton's intention, his Satan appeals to ordinary human nature as a more splendid and admirable figure than his God. It is the element of the heroic which rings most true: by hypothesis Milton's Almighty is invincible, for nothing can finally win against that which is all-powerful; yet Satan in *Paradise Lost*, with the dice thus hopelessly loaded against him, dared to "defy th' Omnipotent to arms." It was foolish; prudence demanded obedience, common sense counselled acquiescence; but all that is best and most heroic in human nature applauds the splendid recklessness which made a bid for power against the Heavenly Tyrant. "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n!" And it is the same attractive recklessness that

still induces men to risk the hell of modern war rather than tamely submit to a so-called peace which they feel to be ignoble or mean.

This fact must not be lost sight of in trying to formulate the Christian's alternative to war. Too often the opponents of war have done an unwitting injustice to the case they seek to destroy, for they assume, if they do not explicitly allege, unworthy motives in the warrior. But it goes without saying that no progress can be made in mutual understanding unless there be granted at the outset full and complete recognition of the sincerity of soldier and pacifist alike: we must take both at their best and not at their worst; and the Christian objection to war, therefore, must not be confused with a condemnation of the men who felt, or who feel it their duty to fight: it ought to be possible to recognise the conscience of the fighter and his devotion to what he deems to be right, while at the same time we dissent from his judgment. Oliver Cromwell's remark to the Lords Commissioners of the Scottish Kirk is apt in this connection for all parties to this controversy: "I beseech you, gentlemen," said Cromwell, "by the mercies of God to deem it possible that you may be mistaken!" The institution of chattel slavery provides an analogy. No one can read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* without recognising St Clare, the slaveholder, as a Christian gentleman, and in him Mrs Stowe drew for her readers a picture of the typical Southern planter of pre-abolition days: yet to the conscience of the twentieth

century a Christian slaveholder is a contradiction in terms. We recognise St Clare's sincerity in holding men as chattels, and yet without exception the Churches of to-day negative his judgment. So in the matter of war: the Military Service Act of 1916 in Great Britain gave legal recognition to the "Conscientious Objector," but over against some 15,000 of such there was an unnumbered multitude of those whom Dr Henry Hodgkin has called "Conscientious Assentors." The only valid attitude, therefore, on the part of the pacifist towards his fellow-Christians who do not share his convictions is that imputed to George Fox. On one occasion William Penn is said to have asked Fox what he should do with his sword, to which the founder of the Society of Friends replied, "Wear it so long as thou canst!" That advice still holds good. The modern world demands that we endorse the methods and the way of war as a final resort in international emergency, and in the presence of that demand the word comes to every Christian citizen:—"Endorse them so long as thou canst." That is to say, so long as we can reconcile war with our Christian conscience, we have no right to repudiate the way of the sword; but, on the other hand, if from the lips and the life of Jesus Christ we learn a "more excellent way," then, in highest loyalty alike to God and to man, that better way must be the path we tread.

One other preliminary consideration needs to be set down before we proceed to deal with our

problem. We need to differentiate sharply and clearly between war and the use of force. War, of course, involves the use of force, but—as will be shown later—it involves other things besides; and it is these other things and not force *per se* which gives it its distinctive quality and character: there is no need, therefore, to confuse the issue by setting up the Tolstoyan dilemma of either war or non-resistance: the Christian's alternative to war may in certain cases be an attitude of non-resistance, but on the contrary it may not: for it is certainly never mere sentimentalism or supine acquiescence in high-handed wrong: peace is not a synonym for a quietist attitude to life! Physical force—like any other gift of God to the children of men—is in and of itself non-moral; it is neither good nor bad in its intrinsic quality, any more than is any other aspect of the material world: indeed, from the point of view of modern physics, with its electrodynamic hypothesis, all matter is but one manifestation of the essential energy or force in which all things consist. As a fact of practical everyday procedure, therefore, we can none of us dispense with the use of force without repudiating all our contacts with the material world; the logic of non-resistance, pressed to its ultimate issue, is suicide; and even in that act we must use the very force we would fain discard. But if physical force is non-moral, then it may be used either for or against God's purposes. Dr Lyman Abbott, in his *Theology of an Evolutionist*, once put the issue crisply, if inadequately, when

he said, "Love may use force, Hate may not"; and it is not without significance in this connection that the use of force finds a Christian sanction in the story of the expulsion of the money-changers from the Temple. The story has often been misread and misapplied by apologists for war: in Sir John Millais' picture, the "scourge of small cords" becomes a cat-o'-nine-tails in the hands of Jesus, and on this basis justification has been found for all the coercive methods of modern civilisation, from the loving restraint which holds an infant from harm to the hateful brutalities of the battlefield. But it is only in John's Gospel that the "scourge" is mentioned at all, and even there it is nowhere alleged that it was applied to human beings: "He drove them out of the temple, *both the sheep and the oxen,*" but apparently not the men. Also, if we take the story as it stands, it records what was obviously a triumph of moral power rather than of physical violence: grant if we will the use of Millais' "cat-o'-nine-tails," yet is it conceivable that one man thus armed could clear the Temple Court of its multitude of traffickers? The secret of His victory lay in the conviction which traders and people shared with Jesus that He was right and they were wrong, and it was this conviction which drove them forth rather than any coercive tactics on the part of Jesus. Nevertheless, money-changers' tables cannot be overturned without a modicum of physical force, and we may be grateful therefore that the incident has been recorded as a witness to the fact that One whose

“ meat was to do the Will of God ” found within the terms of that Will a place for the use of force.

Such an admission, however, does not imply an endorsement of that specific use of physical force which we find in war. The apologist for war proves too much when he is content merely to repudiate the doctrine of non-resistance; for by a similar process of reasoning we could justify any of the hoary iniquities, from gladiatorial shows to piracy, which Christendom has long ago unanimously outlawed. War is a human institution, recognised as such by civilised peoples, definitely budgeted for and prepared for as a specific national service, and envisaged everywhere as a method adopted by human beings for dealing with certain practical emergencies in the life of nations; and while therefore the use of force may and will still have its place in the economy of civilised life, yet it is not irrational to isolate the problem of war from those other problems and practical difficulties which call for the exercise of coercive force in human relationships. The history of moral achievement suggests that organised evil is eliminated from the common life of man by a succession of attacks in detail rather than by a massed attack all along the line, and it is not therefore unduly sanguine to say that it ought to be possible to abolish the institution of war long before the Christian conscience has pronounced judgment upon all the detailed ethical questions which arise in many departments of life through the application of physical force. An analogy again may be found in the institution of chattel-slavery,

for that institution was abolished in the nineteenth century, despite the fact that the prerogatives of human personality which slavery violates still await adequate recognition in the economic and racial and other relationships of the world about us.

War and the Christian's relation to war can thus be dealt with as a problem by itself; and what this problem is in its essentials for the Christian man must therefore be indicated before we proceed to face the question of its solution.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM

THE institution of war in some respects presents the world with its gravest and most pressing problem, and this for two reasons. First, the constant preparation for war by all civilised peoples, and the constant obsession with the necessity for national defence, levies such a toll both upon the material resources and upon the spiritual energy of the populace that many of the things which need to be done for the refashioning of the social fabric go by default. The national budgets of every people are weighted down with war charges, either in payment for past wars or in preparation for possible wars to come, with the result that social services of all kinds are crabbed and the overburdened taxpayer welcomes any kind of public economy which promises a fraction of relief: in these circumstances, there is little enthusiasm for any endeavour to grapple with urgent social problems which require finance for their adequate treatment. Meantime, industry in post-war Europe is in constant fear of financial strangulation, and higher education is beyond the reach of many who desire it and are fit for it. The only activities which are not starved are military and naval and aerial, and yet the more

these flourish, the worse in an economic sense is the plight of the community.

The other reason which makes the problem of war supremely urgent lies in the destructive character of modern warfare, to which reference has already been made. It profits little to realise or try to realise our social ideals, to train up a generation of educated citizens, to re-order the economic fabric, if by the failure of diplomacy at a critical juncture or by some folly of statecraft, the whole fabric of civilised life is to be blown into fragments by the blast of war. If there be even a tithe of truth in the forecasts of generals and statesmen and scientists already quoted, then it follows that unless mankind can find a substitute for war as the final court of appeal in international affairs, there will be no world to preserve and no world-problems to be solved. From this point of view, therefore, the problem of the abolition of war overshadows every other problem which arises from human relationship, and it is the condition-precident without which no final solution can be found for the social, industrial, economic, racial and other difficulties which at present engage the energies and the devotion of good men and women. The situation indeed in every country to-day has reached a pitch of absurdity which would destroy war and all its works in a shout of popular derision, were it not for the obsessions and fears which still hold men in bondage to their baser selves; for the endeavour to preserve civilisation by means which inevitably spell its destruction reminds one of the lament of

the old lady who found herself compelled to "kill her cat to save it from dying!"

But if war is thus the supreme problem for the citizen, it is still more so for the Christian. For while he shares the dilemma of the citizen who is called to preserve his country by preparing for its destruction, he is also acutely conscious of a moral dilemma; for he is discovering that the Person of Jesus Christ has a relation to the fact of war, as He has to all the other facts of life. This twentieth century indeed is in some respects more definitely alive to the significance of Jesus than any century has been since the first: the cry "Back to Jesus," which was raised in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, is bearing fruit, and through consecrated scholarship we have to-day a clearer conception of His relation both to God and to man than our fathers had; we understand too, as they did not, something of His relation to the wider problems of His own day: for the whole of His earthly ministry was intimately associated with the politics of the ancient world, and in His own Person He had to face the problem of participation in war. Should He follow His chosen path of fidelity to God to the bitter end? or should He succumb to Jewish expectations and construe His Messiahship in terms of a military captaincy? What of Rome and its legions? The occupation of His native land by an alien and a pagan tyranny? Should He "cast out Satan by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils?" overcome the Roman arms by arming His followers? None can doubt that, with His dominant and dominating

Personality, He could have made a bid for political power and rallied His countrymen in the effort to drive Rome into the sea. Then why did He not do so? For centuries the ethical significance of Jesus' attitude was obscured, and He tended to become a mythological Figure involved in the toils of theological speculation: but modern scholarship has rescued Him and set Him once more in the midst of the world He came to save. So the Christian of to-day, as he faces an armed and embattled world, is asking what is the mind of Christ on this question of war; and hence the dilemma.

This dilemma has sometimes been put as "Christ or Cæsar"; but it is more subtle than that. Jesus Himself found it possible to "pay tribute to Cæsar," and there are evidences both in the Gospels and in the New Testament generally that the Roman government was by no means or in every respect at variance with a true Christian faith: it stood for justice and tolerance and a wide measure of liberty between man and man, and these are Christian values. But at bottom, Rome was coercive in its government of the provinces, and the Christian of the first century had to ask himself the same question which is challenging the conscience of the Christian to-day.¹ In view then both of our more intimate understanding of Jesus and of the pressure of the war-system upon modern life, the question cannot be burked: Is

¹ For a scholarly elucidation of the problem as it confronted the first-century Christian, see C. J. Cadoux's *The Early Christian Attitude to War*.

war as we know it an activity in which the Christian can be faithful to Christ or an enterprise which the Church can endorse in His name? However exalted the purpose which impels men to arms, are the processes of war ever an expression of the Christian spirit or congruous with the redemptive passion which took Jesus to the Cross?

If so, of course no difficulty ensues. But if not, then a question of personal responsibility emerges for every one who is engaged directly or indirectly in the operations of war, namely this: ought I to identify my will and action with the State at war? or am I not bound—within the limits of that restricted liberty which a warring State allows me—to express Christ's Will and manifest His Spirit as the one and only means by which I can further His redemptive purpose in the world? It is to be noted—as will be emphasised later—that a sub-Christian world may know no better way than war for the settlement of international conflict: it is often the only way in which such a world can register its moral protest against the onslaught of evil: but is the Church or the Christian man to accept on demand the way of a sub-Christian world or to be true to the Will and Way of Jesus Christ at any cost and at any risk of material distress to self or to others?

The common conscience of mankind does not answer these questions as it would have done even five or six decades ago: for to-day we have learned to distinguish between wars of aggression and wars of defence: the distinction is one which statesmen find it difficult to define, since an apparently

aggressive blow may actually be struck in defence or to anticipate an attack: also aggression may be expressed diplomatically or by policy until a neighbour people is thereby provoked into military aggression in defence—so it appears and is argued—of threatened interests. But it nevertheless registers a moral advance on the part of the modern world that wars of aggression—in the abstract at least—are never justified. Even a people or a government motivated by aggressive designs always disguises its motive under a nobler name: in actual practice the plea of “defence” is usually raised, and an astute statesman can generally present his case in this guise to the people of his own country: it may be defence of one’s native land, of some neighbour nation, of liberty, the weak, the persecuted, of some idealistic or moral end, of civilisation, or even of Christianity. It is significant that during the World-War not a single one of the belligerents admitted aggressive purposes, and one and all were anxious to impress upon public opinion in neutral countries that their side was fighting in “defence”! A curious and contradictory situation in which no one was an aggressor and all were fighting on the defensive! But it means that in the world of to-day war can never secure popular support unless it be represented as a method of repelling and defeating the assault of evil; and it is only on such grounds that good men can be induced to engage in the operations of war as in a Christian crusade.

If the problem of war were a simple matter of

either doing or not doing certain things, it would be easy to give a plain yes or no to the question of its legitimacy from a Christian standpoint; but for the individual, the problem is complicated and confused by all manner of secondary issues. For instance, the element of personal responsibility and personal decision—which is central to the Christian ethic—seems often entirely foreign to questions of war and peace: nations go to war, not private individuals, and personal responsibility therefore seems lost in the demand of the State upon its citizens whenever there comes a call to arms. Then again, when the plea of defence is raised, it seems as though we can only repudiate war by repudiating the Christian duty of succouring the needy: a Christian man, it is said, would not feel called to stand by, inert and helpless, while a bully assaulted a little child; then—however distasteful or abhorrent the clash of battle may be to our Christian sensibilities—can we refuse to act when both aggressor and victim are not individuals but nations? The problem is sometimes stated as a choice of evils from one or other of which there is no escape: thus, it may be admitted that war is not to be reconciled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but then, so it is said, neither is a refusal to go to war (granted that we take war at its best as an endeavour to repel the assault of evil upon the community): the individual therefore has no option but to choose the lesser of two evils and stand in with his country in resisting the aggressor by the only immediately practicable means, which

is the method of war. Incidentally, we may note that such a plea assumes without warrant and certainly without proof that in the presence of such a dilemma war is of necessity the lesser of two evils. In view of what has already been said as to the character of the "next war," and in view of considerations which will appear later, such an assumption needs to be scrutinised far more closely than is usually done. But for the moment we may let that pass; for undoubtedly part of the problem of war is the sense of being shut up to a choice of evils, so that, though the way of battle is not an ideal exit from the dilemma, yet it often seems to the individual Christian the only honourable alternative to craven acquiescence in blatant wrong.

The problem of war for the Christian is frequently complicated by thinking of an army and navy in terms of a police force. One hears the plea advanced, for instance, by sincere lovers of peace that the British and American navies could between them police the high seas and so maintain the peace of the world against all comers! Or the rôle of international policeman is assigned to the League of Nations, and the threat of war by the League against any nation risking an appeal to arms is held out as a sufficient security against any such adventure. Such hopes rest upon that misconception of human nature to which reference has already been made; and the long tragic history of world-politics can be quoted to show that in the long run any endeavour to secure international peace by force or threat of coercion

merely precipitates the very war it seeks to avoid. Milton's "Satan" is more than a mythological figure here; for the net result of "peace by force" is to encourage preparations and combinations among the threatened peoples until at last they feel themselves strong enough in a military sense to challenge the self-appointed "policemen" who undertake to preserve international harmony by *force majeure*. The situation is not unlike that of *Punch's* irate parent on Bank Holiday, who caught the ear of his tired and whimpering offspring and demanded angrily, "Now then, are you going to enjoy yourself or shall I make you?" Human nature is not made that way, and all attempts to impose peace upon unwilling peoples break upon that stubborn fact.

Nevertheless confusion between the soldier and the policeman often forms a specious apologetic for the maintenance of armaments, and no case against war is adequate which ignores it. There are, of course, certain obvious and superficial differences between military and police action which strike any intelligent observer. For instance, the function of an army is to fight the armies of other Powers, but no one ever heard of police forces being marshalled one against another in order to give battle: consequently the efficiency or magnitude of the police force in one city does not stimulate other cities to competition in defence measures. But in the international world, the building of a battleship by one nation is invariably a challenge to other nations to do likewise; and so there inevitably emerges that competition in

armaments which is one of the factors in the perpetuation of war. For, as Israel Zangwill truly puts it in his play *The War God*:

“ . . . this wealth of ships and guns inflames the vulgar
And makes the very war it guards against.”

Again, the police deal directly with the law-breaker or wrong-doer, and always without deliberate or intentional injury to the innocent citizen who may be at hand. It is, however, and always has been, one of the ironies of war that the chief culprits escape the retribution which poetic justice would bring upon them, and instead they become in many cases the heroes of their people and the belauded figures in national history. When an army fights, its shells and bullets and poison gas fall indiscriminately upon good and bad, innocent and guilty alike: the soldier deals with the enemy *en masse*, the policeman deals with him individually. So also, the police in endeavouring to restrain or apprehend the wrong-doer are merely the agents of an impartial judicial authority, and are themselves amenable to that authority, should they, in the discharge of their duty, violate any of the laws under which they act. An army, on the other hand, works under no recognised code of laws: or, more correctly, the law it observes is self-made and designed to suit its own requirements. The aim of military force is not to bring the enemy before an impartial court of justice, but by and of itself it acts as prosecution, judge, jury, jailer, and executioner

in one; while in the process it seeks to inflict upon the enemy people the maximum of injury, harm, and destruction, alike to property and to life.

It is to be observed in this connection that the forcible sanctions with which the League of Nations is endowed (see especially Article 16 of the Covenant, where the Council of the League is empowered to call for quotas of armed force from the constituent members of the League in case of necessity) approximate to a police function, in that the sanctions are never to be applied except under the authority and by the direction of the Council of the League. It is good to be able to recognise this as a step in advance upon the hitherto prevailing practice of competing and self-sufficient sovereignties acting through national armies; but it ought not to be confused with the true rôle of a police force, which differs from that of an army not only in the incidental and superficial difference already indicated, but also in certain things which are deeper and more fundamental.

These fundamental differences emerge when we judge both the military and the police systems by their ideals. If the ideal be good, then the system—though it be inadequate at present—can be progressively amended in the direction of the ideal; but if the ideal be itself intrinsically hurtful to human welfare, then any amendment or improvement of the system merely increases its capacity for ill. So then as between the police ideal and the military ideal. Ideally, the police system exists not to revenge itself upon an offender,

and not merely to protect society from the depredations of a wrong-doer, but so to deal with the offender that he may be returned to society as a desirable citizen. It is true that this ideal is often obscured in practice, and that when it is a conscious aim it is often expressed in an ineffective way; but the ideal is there, and it is possible for any police system to develop in that direction. Such an ideal, however, only needs to be stated in order to reveal its complete opposition to the ideal under which an army is organised and acts; for the aim of an army is not to reform the offender, but to smash him; not to return the offender to his place and position in the world, but—as the Treaty of Versailles shows—to cripple his power and to rob him so far as is possible of the opportunity to recover. The antithesis indeed between the two ideals can be put in a single contrast when it is stated that the police ideal is redemptive and the military ideal destructive. This contrast is seen most acutely when we consider the actual methods by which a police force or an army operates; for the police exist in order to protect life and property, while an army functions by the destruction of life and property: or, in other terms, the power of the police is one of the prime buttresses of a law-abiding people, while the existence of armaments threatens the very civilisation which has produced them.

The problem of war, therefore, in its impact upon the Christian conscience, is not to be disposed of by resolving it into terms of police tactics. The problem stands out starkly amid all the

qualifications and sophistries with which it has been surrounded and by which at times the issue has been beclouded, because there is in the modern world and among thinking people a new realisation of what war is in its fundamental processes and in its ultimate reactions; and at the same time there is a new and deeper understanding of the Person of Jesus Christ and His significance for the twentieth century. Can the processes of war and the Gospel of Jesus ever be reconciled? and if not, what is the Christian's alternative to war? That is the problem before us.

CHAPTER III

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

THE question of the legitimacy of war for the Christian rests in the last analysis upon an appeal to the authority of Christ ; but it is necessary to realise where that authority is to be found and in what it consists. To many people that authority seems to have been dethroned by the processes and results of modern scholarship as applied to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments ; time was when it was deemed sufficient to justify one's faith or conduct by citing an appropriate text ; but " the devil can quote Scripture to his purpose," and the weakness of this method lies in the fact that the predilection of the person who quotes can easily be mistaken for the guidance of the Spirit. The writer visited one of the big penitentiaries in the Middle West of the United States recently, and the warder who acted as guide pointed with obvious pride to the electric chair in what is appropriately known as the " death chamber " : there was displayed the whole of the hideous paraphernalia associated with the scientific execution of the criminal, while around the walls were framed portraits and the finger-prints of some eighty odd men and women who had paid the extreme penalty of the law. Conversation

inevitably drifted to the question of capital punishment, and the mere possibility of its ultimate abolition was received with indignant scorn by the warder: "Why," he said, "it's against nature, and what's more it's against religion!" This was interesting, and so he explained: "Don't the good Book say that when God was angry with men He destroyed them by water and then by fire? What's the difference if we destroy them by electricity? No, sir, capital punishment's a Christian institution!" The strict logician might murmur *non sequitur*, but neither Latin nor logic could refute Holy Writ, and there the matter ended!

The difficulty with the proof-text method, however, is that it entangles its devotees in inextricable moral dilemmas; thus, on the strict and literal authority of the Bible, they must be at one and the same time advocates and opponents of capital punishment, they must be both slaves and free men, polygamists and monogamists, warriors and pacifists; for it passes the wit of man to read an imprecatory Psalm as though it were the Sermon on the Mount, or to combine Joshua's treatment of his enemies with the reaction of Jesus towards His. The same difficulty arises if we confine our citations to the recorded words of Jesus Himself: the opponent of war may quote the text, "resist not him that is evil," or insist upon Jesus' injunction to "love your enemies"; but during the Great War eminent preachers and churchmen of all creeds found relief of conscience in such texts as, "I came not to bring peace but a

sword," or "He that hath no sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one"; or "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Sometimes indeed the proof-text apologist struck a pitfall, as when the military representative on the statutory tribunal at Oxford sought to dispose of the Quaker objection to war by the question: "Did not Jesus say, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth?'" The so-called apocalyptic passages in the Gospels and the forecasts of the violent doom of the wicked in several of the parables of Jesus were also prominent as phases of a Christian apologetic for a "holy war." Such instances could be multiplied many times over both in condemnation of Christian participation in war and in favour of it; but it is obvious that the issue can never be decided by rival quotations even from the lips of Jesus Himself.

In default of such decision, the authority of Christ is sometimes sought by imagining the reaction of Jesus if He were found in the context of the modern world. The late Mr W. T. Stead once published a Christmas brochure under the title *If Christ came to Chicago*; and the best seller both in England and in America towards the end of the nineteenth century was a naïve and sincere appeal to Christian people, written by an American Methodist minister, the late Dr Charles M. Sheldon, and entitled *In His Steps; or, What would Jesus do?* Any publication which thus focuses attention, however crudely, upon the Person of Jesus Christ is bound to have a healthy influence in the realm of morals; but the appeal

of such literature is as much to the imagination of the reader as to the authority of Christ, for it is not easy to see Jesus actually in the midst of life as we know it, and He was too profound and too startling a Personality to enable anyone to predict with certainty where He would be found or how He would express Himself in any modern situation with which we are familiar. In the early days of the Great War, a well-known London preacher—whose spiritual insight is only equalled by his Christian courage—addressed a meeting in Manchester in the interests of peace: war-time passion had not then attained its full flood and he was accorded a courteous hearing by a large audience: at the close of his address a keen and convinced supporter of the then government, who was also a devout Christian, put the question: “Will Dr —— say what he thinks Jesus would have done if He had been at the Foreign Office in August 1914?” And the reply was immediately forthcoming, “I can’t imagine Jesus at the Foreign Office: can you?” It was an apt and clever answer, but it failed to convince just because the imaginations of questioner and speaker did not coincide: the court of appeal in both question and answer was the authority of Christ, but the personal equation of each man and his personal estimate of Christ’s reaction to a given situation made it possible for authority to point in two directions at once. For the same reason, questions which were often put by both pacifist and bellicist (to use Mr Norman Angell’s ugly but convenient word) failed to carry conviction

or to make for agreement, so long as the questions required a common imagination for a common answer. Such questions were these: "Can you imagine Jesus thrusting a bayonet into the body of His enemy?" "Would Jesus don khaki?" "Would He approve the slow starvation of innocent people by a blockade?" These and similar questions were put by the pacifist, and on the other side, these: "Do you think Jesus would stand by with folded arms while Belgium was being overrun?" "Would Jesus refuse to fight in order to save His native land from rapine and atrocity and frightfulness?" In either case, it was the familiar, inconclusive, unconvincing question, "What would Jesus do?"

→ We must therefore find the authority of Christ in something other than proof texts or our own estimate of how He would act in a modern context. Even if we could decide the latter question, we should not necessarily be nearer an authoritative solution of our ethical difficulties; for one man's duty is not another's: differences of circumstance, capacity, opportunity, and above all differences of vocation make duty a matter which cannot be prescribed *en bloc* for a multitude, but always something to which the individual is impelled by his own conscience and which none can determine but himself. Indeed just here is to be found a fundamental defect of the usual military demand that it is every citizen's duty to defend his country, the implication always being that defence can only be conducted by force of arms: apart altogether from the question of

the legitimacy of war from a Christian standpoint, the assumption that the moral duty of the citizen can be scheduled by the State as a uniform task for all sorts and conditions of men is something which strikes at the very roots both of human liberty and human responsibility. That the duty of great masses of men will be identical in a given emergency is not questioned, nor is it denied that duty may be suggested and encouraged along certain lines where common action is necessary for a common end: there are always those whose only duty in a bewildering situation is to submit to the direction of others who believe they have a clear vision of the needs of the moment. Such a situation arises when a nation is plunged into war; but if the warring State rides rough-shod over the convictions of conscientious citizens and seeks to coerce them into the regimented task of military service, it is inducing such men to be false to the duty which they feel to be laid upon them, and is in effect declaring that conscience is something which can be ignored at the demand of public expediency. To hold conscience in contempt, however, in an emergency is to teach men that it is of secondary account in all the affairs of life; for if it does not count in time of war, why should it count in time of peace? The last state therefore of a community which teaches such a lesson is apt to be worse than the first; for it is these incalculable moral assets which alone make a nation worth preserving; and consequently the statesman who invades the prerogatives of conscience in the name of "national

duty" is doing an ill service to his country, and is always sacrificing the greater for the sake of the less. Here of course is the fatal objection to all systems of military conscription: for even if they be qualified by an adequate conscience clause¹ they assume that duty is a thing to be imposed from without instead of being accepted from within. The same assumption lay behind the retort of a friend when the present writer publicly pleaded on Christian grounds that conscription should not override conscience: "Do you think," asked the friend, "that you know better than the Archbishop of Canterbury?" The Archbishop had blessed the Conscription Act: but it was the first and only time that the writer had heard the dogma of infallibility applied to an English ecclesiastic, and it is to be noted that it was applied not—as with the Pope—to matters of dogma, but to a matter of duty. The very controversy, however, which arose at that time over that issue showed that even in time of war duty was not regarded as entirely outside the range of personal responsibility. This estimate of the nature of duty is now generally admitted in most realms other than the military. It used

¹ The British Military Service Acts during the Great War made legal provision for the exemption of conscientious objectors but only in a few instances was the exemption operative, on account of the war-time passions which governed the adjudicating tribunals: the insuperable difficulty of devising a test by which conscience could be distinguished from less worthy impulses led to grave illegalities, and proved the impossibility of combining conscription with a due regard for the duty of the individual citizen.

to be held, of course, that duty could be prescribed in matters of religious worship, and the ages of persecution, with their Acts of Uniformity and their roll of martyrs, bear witness to the same folly and the same futility which still afflict the minds of men in regard to military service. But in the one case as in the other, duty is a question not of a man's relation to the State or the Church or any other external power, but only of his relation to God and his fidelity to what—in the particular circumstances of his own life—he feels to be God's will for him. The classic statement of a sense of duty is in Luther's defiance of the regimen prescribed by the Pope: "It is neither safe nor honest to do aught against conscience: here stand I: I can do no other: God help me: Amen!"

All this has a direct bearing upon the authority of Christ; for if it is not something which defines our exact duty as Christians, and if it is compatible with the utmost liberty of conscience, in what does it consist? The answer lies on the surface of the Gospel story. The first disciples did not approach Jesus in the first instance as an authority to whom they were bound to submit, nor did they think of Him at the outset in terms of "Divinity," which laid down an inescapable law: they came to Him first of all as a Man among men, one with whom they companied on the hillsides of Galilee or in the cities by the lake shore: but it was not long before they discovered that He "taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Jesus has frequently

been classed with other religious leaders and teachers: His name is often placed midway in a list beginning with Confucius or Moses, and ending with Darwin or Karl Marx; in the list may be included Plato and Augustine, Mohammed, Francis of Assisi, Francis Bacon, Kant, Goethe, Emerson, and, indeed, any and every man or woman who has contributed in any measure to the world's enlightenment; but, as has been remarked,¹ such a juxtaposition gives a jar to the Christian reader, not because it is an offence against orthodoxy, but because it is an offence against decency. That is to say, we feel that somehow Jesus does not belong to a list like that, nor in fact to any other list which can be devised: indeed, it argues a certain lack of discrimination to place Him in any list at all; for though there are doubtless elements in common which equate Him with others of the world's teachers, yet in one obvious respect Jesus was unique, and He towers above every other teacher who ever taught. The distinction has been expressed by saying that while other teachers taught what was, Jesus was what He taught: others uttered the truth, but Jesus *was* the truth: in Him precept and practice, teaching and action, perfectly coincided: He embodied and did not merely enunciate the things He proclaimed. With this result, that the best commentary upon His words is His life, and the best interpretation of His life is His words. Consider, for instance, the central note in the Christian ethic

¹ Dr Carnegie Simpson in *The Fact of Christ*.

which is indicated by the word "Love": the precepts and commands in the Gospels concerning "Love" find their parallel in one form or another, either partially or completely, in other of the world's teachings: among pre-Christian writings, Confucius, Moses, and Gautama the Buddha can all be cited; yet until Jesus came—and for that matter since His day by those who ignore Him—"Love" was often misinterpreted as a mild sentimentality, a sort of indulgent kindness which was always easy and good-natured. But, while the injunction to "love one another" has been common to all the world's greatest moralists, it was only Jesus who gave it precision and definition by saying, "this is my commandment, that ye love one another *as I have loved you*." From that moment the world, if it cared to turn to the Gospel-Portrait, has known what "Love" is, and no longer can we confuse it with what is merely soft and easy: in the light of that historic embodiment of Love, we know that it is a passion which seeks always to make men at one with the life of God, and it uses any and every means to secure that end, except means which are themselves a violation of the Divine holiness; for it is not only true that the end, however exalted, can never justify the means, but unless means and end are in moral harmony the one inevitably stultifies the other. Consequently, we find that the dealings of Jesus with His fellow-men were not stereotyped or uniform, except in the impulse which moved Him in His endeavour

to win men from their sins and bring them into harmony with that Life of God for which they were created: His methods indeed were as varied as the human nature with which He had to deal: His constant aim, the dominating passion of His life, was to get the wrong-doer right, turn the sinner into a saint, make man at-one with God, and only on that basis make him at-one with his fellow. So, with sinners of a gross and obvious kind—the victims of bodily passion or social convenience—Jesus was usually tender, forgiving, even indulgent; for He believed in their power to “make good” in response to His encouragement and advice. With the Pharisees, nothing but drastic self-revelation could avail for repentance and righteousness: they must see themselves as they really were in all their hateful hypocrisy; and so with them Jesus was stern, seemingly cruel, inexorable in His exposure of their inmost souls. For some He used no other means than the power of prayer: with others—like Nicodemus or the Syro-Phœnician woman—He used quiet, persuasive argument or gentle irony: with His disciples—disputing over petty points of prestige—He was infinitely patient, and sought both by precept and by example to lead them in the way of Divine rectitude.

But the climax of Jesus' love for men is seen in the closing events of the Gospel story. For there in Jerusalem He faced, in one burning focus, every evil which had assailed Him from the outset of His ministry; yet, on the plane of earthly

action, there was at the last no way of defeating that evil except by compromise or meeting evil with evil ; it was this dilemma which lay behind—though it does no more than partially explain—the awful agony of Gethsemane ; for there He had either to allow evil to triumph—to wreck His ministry, obliterate His life, crush His friends, scatter His disciples, bring death and disaster upon innocent folk who trusted Him (and all this He foresaw and foretold in apocalyptic warnings)—or else He had to resist aggressive evil with its own weapons, thrust His enemies aside heedless of their spiritual welfare, and so become partner in the very sin from which He sought to redeem them. In that dilemma, therefore, He did the hardest thing that man can do when the assault of evil is pressed ; for He merely stood still, faithful to the will and love of God, and allowed evil to nail Him to the Cross. Yet in that seemingly impotent reaction to evil, the purpose of His love was achieved : for, however we explain it (and that is the province of theology), the vision of that Man upon the Cross, hating the sin which murdered Him and yet praying for the very men who sinned, somehow stirs the soul, as no punishment or penalty could do, to repentance and recoil, and so to oneness with the life of God. But the Cross was not the end, it was only a beginning ; for the story of the Resurrection—whatever we make of it as literal history—is a witness to the fact that the love of Jesus was not obliterated even by death ; for He returned to the very world which had rejected

Him, not to bring judgment or vengeance, but to be for evermore the Friend and Saviour of all who give to Him the allegiance of mind and heart and will.

Whenever we face this Gospel story and seize the significance of its unrivalled Love, we touch the secret of the authority of Christ. For the Gospel-Portrait, taken in its entirety, requires not only intellectual judgment on our part, but also moral decision : that is to say, we do not merely ask what manner of Man He was, but the practical issue is thrust upon us : Are we, amid the circumstances of our life, for Jesus or against Him ? Do we endorse the spiritual values for which He stood, or do we despise them ? The questions may be ignored, but once faced they cannot be evaded, for they are enforced by a sense of obligation : in other words, we know that we *ought* to live as He lived, and that the spirit and attitude to life which were His ought to be ours, from the greatest to the smallest activity of our being. Here again Jesus differs from other world-teachers : there is much in those other lives which is admirable, but in other respects we would not be what they were even if we could : genius so often is another name for the eccentric, and consequently while we admire it from a distance, we have generally no desire to imitate it. Devotees of Thomas Carlyle, for instance, never wished to change shoes with his wife, and the letters of Jane Welch Carlyle have justified their hesitation ! It means that, despite all the inspiration which Carlyle brought to

multitudes, he never laid his disciples under a sense of obligation to share his temper and outlook. But one of the remarkable things about Jesus was the fact that He seemed such a normal member of the human race: there was much in Him that baffled the understanding even of His intimates, but there was no suggestion of eccentricity, and men and women everywhere had the sense not only that His life was eminently liveable, but that they ought so to live. But this sense of obligation did not pass with the bodily presence of Jesus, nor was it the monopoly of His contemporaries: on the contrary, it has come to all who in every age have faced the Fact of Christ with intellectual integrity and with moral honesty; and the same is true to-day. Even when, as is often the case, Christianity is dismissed by men of the world as impracticable, there is the tacit, if not avowed, admission that the world ought to be such as to allow Christian values to become operative. It is but another aspect of the sense of obligation which derives from the Person of Jesus.

That, of course, is why, historically, new values have attached to right and wrong since Jesus lived: a new standard of moral judgment and a new sense of sin came into the world with Him, and things which men had previously accepted without question began to be suspect. Jesus Christ became a fact of conscience. It is, for example, no accident that one after another of the world's time-honoured iniquities have disappeared from Christendom: the gladiator was

the first to go : the status of womanhood is always a test of the Christian standards implicit in any community, and it needs but a casual comparison between a society influenced by such standards and one from which they are absent to see at once the reaction of Christianity in creating a new conscience in regard to womanhood. In our own day, duelling and chattel slavery have gone because they were condemned by the Christian conscience ; and so one might go through a catalogue of earthly ills which have been successively challenged and routed because they were at variance with the way of Life and Love which men see in Jesus Christ. But the Christian conscience does not stand still : it is not static but dynamic, and other iniquities are therefore being challenged as our modern civilisation is brought under the scrutiny of a Christian judgment. One of the principal of these is war, and all the questions which gather about it : this, indeed, is likely to be the next great issue with which Christianity will have to deal ; for, as has already been indicated, either civilisation must be re-organised on a warless basis, or else it is doomed, and with it Christianity itself would be jeopardised. Not for the first time in history, practical expediency and a sense of Christian obligation are found to coincide.

This sense of obligation, however, implies something else which also bears upon the authority of Christ. Indeed, a sense that we are obliged to do a thing and a recognition of authority always go hand in hand. This conjunction is not con-

fined to the realm of religion : religious authority is merely one example of a universal principle which applies as truly to the multiplication-table as to the ethics of Jesus ; for when we admit that two and two make four we recognise in effect that mathematical truth is not something private and personal to us—a matter of individual predilection—but is an expression of something which belongs to the very constitution of the universe : the truths of physical science are as valid in the furthest confines of space as they are in the humblest affairs of earth : the spectrum, which the physicist obtains with a blowpipe and a prism in a laboratory, enables the astronomer to announce the chemical composition of the fixed stars. And so everywhere. It might be a convenience to rogues and thieves if two and two sometimes made five, but we know that in our practical everyday dealings with one another we “ought”—we are under an obligation which we cannot argue but which we are bound to accept—to act on the principle that two and two make four : to do otherwise is to be dishonoured before God and our own conscience. In other words, the multiplication-table has authority because our sense of obligation tells us that it is a part of the intrinsic nature of things ; or in religious phraseology, it is, on the physical plane, an expression of the will of God.

The same applies to the authority of Christ. We read the story of His life and seize the significance of His Personality, and forthwith there is laid upon us a sense of obligation which we may

defy but which we cannot dispute : for His words and witness carry an immediate (in the literal sense of "not mediated") and instinctive conviction to all who consider them dispassionately with an open mind and a ready will. But obligation here, as elsewhere, implies that the thing we "ought" to do, or the standard to which we are called to give obedience, is a part of the moral order of the universe : it is as much an element in the essential nature of things as is the multiplication-table ; or, again to use religious phraseology, it has authority for the life we live because it bespeaks the presence of God. Yet it is to be noted that we reach this conclusion not by arguing from a preconceived dogma as to Christ's "Divinity," but solely through the processes of our own experience as we confront the fact of Jesus Christ. His authority, therefore, rests in the last analysis not on anything external, but on the fundamental spiritual likeness between His nature and ours : as we face the picture of that Man living and dying in a human context 1900 years ago, "deep calleth unto deep," and the conviction smites home to our hearts that in Him we see what has been called "the human life of God Himself."¹ We thus affirm the fundamental dogma of our Christian faith ; for we discover that Jesus was the embodiment or incarnation of the essential Spirit and Character of God ; and it is for this reason that our God-given human nature agrees with and responds to the Godlike in Him. In that fact and in no other is to be found the authority of Christ ; and in the

¹ Henry Van Dyke in *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*.

light of that fact we can say that the Christian way is the only way which can claim the endorsement of Almighty God or possibly win in a God-governed world. In all the concerns of life, therefore, we are called to yield our soul's obedience to His authority.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF WAR

(a) ON THE BATTLE FRONT

IF we are to bring the institution of war to the test of Christ's authority—and no other test has final validity for the Christian man or woman—we must first of all strip war of the illusions which surround it and see it as it really is in its essential nature. There are many factors which go to foster illusion in this matter. The chief of these is the age-long fighting habit of the human race : history is full of it, and, indeed, some history books are full of little else : they contain records of battles as the chief events and the chief glories in a nation's story, military heroes are magnified often out of all proportion to the real worth of their influence in national life and affairs, while the darker side of war—its suffering, its cruelties, its frequent futility, its appalling drag upon human welfare—these are either omitted or glozed over as things of no significance. There is a welcome movement in many countries to-day for a saner and fairer presentation of history, and account is being taken increasingly of the constructive rather than the purely destructive processes which have made the world what it is :¹ but the war emphasis

¹ Especially in Great Britain and in the British Dominions,

is still dominant in much of our education, and it is little wonder, therefore, if children grow to maturity under the illusion that war and warlike preparations are the supreme expression of patriotism and that "national service" and military activity are synonymous terms.

This illusion is buttressed by the point of view which assails the adult citizen at every turn of his daily life. With few exceptions, the newspapers of every land induce their readers to regard war as a regrettable though ever-present possibility, and participation in war as a citizen's chief title to glory. The pageantry of State functions is always the occasion for a display of military power, and the combination of colour and movement and music as troops parade the streets or provide "guards of honour" encourages the false impression that war is a kind of glorified picnic, a thing of nodding plumes and prancing steeds and brave processioning. There is something appealing and contagious about such displays until we learn to see beyond the illusion to the bestial reality which lurks behind it. Richard Le Gallienne in a few telling lines has shown how even the most peace-loving citizen can be swept into a current of dangerous emotion by such pageantry:—

"War I abhor; and yet how sweet
The sound along the marching street
Of drum and fife. And I forget

a place is being found for teaching concerning the League of Nations, and children in the schools are encouraged to study the League and to think of it as an institution essential to national well-being.

Wet eyes of widows, and forget
Broken old mothers, and the whole
Dark butchery without a soul.

Without a soul—save this bright drink
Of heady music, sweet as death;
And even my peace-abiding feet
Go marching with the marching street.

For yonder, yonder, goes the fife,
And what care I for human life?
The tears fill my astonished eyes
And my full heart is like to break;
And yet 'tis all embannered lies,
A dream those little drummers make.

O, it is wickedness to clothe
Yon hideous grinning thing, that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen
That in a garden of glory walks,
Till good men love the thing they loathe!

Art! thou hast many infamies,
But not an infamy like this,
O snap the fife and still the drum,
And show the monster as he is!"

But there are other factors than public pageantry which thus minister to popular illusion in regard to war. Our parks and public places—even the campus and quadrangles of a university—are decorated with captured guns or tanks: one such engine of destruction stood for a time after the Armistice above the chancel steps and right in front of the altar of St Paul's Cathedral in

London, and the congregation were invited to worship the Prince of Peace by bowing before an instrument of war.¹ Army banners, tattered and scarred by battle, are a familiar sight in any of the ancient cathedrals of England, while in Westminster Abbey the numerous monuments to commonplace and inconspicuous soldiers thrust into crowded corners the memorials to the truly great in England's history. The same is true of many of our city squares: sculpture and monuments commemorating battles or honouring those fallen in war are found in every considerable town and on almost every village green, while the heroes of peace are often forgotten or ignored.

In this respect, however, a significant change is to be noted in England and America and the British Dominions, when one compares the memorials of the Great War with those commemorating wars of earlier days. The writer cannot speak from first-hand knowledge of war memorials in Europe except of those along the eastern frontier of France and to some extent in Germany and Belgium; but it is certainly true that the modern French monuments in many cases follow the practice of the older British monuments in celebrating victory or the discomfiture of the foe, while one may search the length and breadth of Great Britain and rarely, if ever, find a memorial relating to the Great War which is other than a

¹ Lest this episode be dismissed as incredible, the exact details, together with a photograph of the gun *in situ*, may be found in *No More War*, the official publication of the British No More War Movement under date August 1923.

tribute to the courage and sacrifice of the men who gave their lives in a cause which they believed to be right. Despite all the handicap with which the way of peace is beset, this is but one evidence of a changing outlook which must ultimately banish the institution of war from the legitimacies of civilised life. Nevertheless, the war-mentality is still extant and vigorous among the peoples generally, and it finds continual expression and encouragement in popular song, in national anthems, and in the emphasis of moving pictures and novels, by which the populace finds much of its relaxation. It is the perpetuation of this war-mentality, this cherishing of illusions concerning war's splendour and glory, which alone makes possible the continual public stress upon things military. Thus, when the King of England opens Parliament in state, it is the military element which preponderates, and the legislators are forgetful of the wise Roman maxim: "Inter arma, leges silent," which in effect reminds us that armaments are the sworn foe of useful legislation. So, too, when an Oriental monarch visits Europe, nine-tenths of his public entertainment consists in reviewing troops, in inspecting the manufacture of armaments, in witnessing military manœuvres, and in watching the movements of warships in battle array: the constructive achievements of western civilisation—its schools and colleges, its hospitals and vast social services, its art and science and music, even its organisation of industry, to say nothing of its professed religion—are ignored or else relegated to an entirely subsidiary place in the

programme.¹ When the airman, Charles M. Lindbergh, crossed the Atlantic alone by aeroplane from America to Paris in the summer of 1927, the American Government immediately appropriated the *kudos* of that event to the Army by placing a battleship at his disposal for the return of himself and his machine to the United States, where he was received with military honours. Also at the instance of the Governor of Missouri he received a Colonel's commission in the National Guard.²

It was hoped by many people at the close of the Great War that the fact of its having been for the first time in history a war waged, not merely by professional soldiers or by comparatively small selected sections of the combatant nations, but by practically the entire male populace between the ages of eighteen and forty, would create such a moral recoil that when the fighters returned to civil life the established illusions concerning war would have no chance to survive. But the event has proved otherwise ; for a new generation has grown up which knows nothing of war at first hand, and even the memory of the fighters tends to become hazy and uncertain under the continual impact of a public opinion nurtured upon illusion in the ways already noted. Also the sanction which the Churches, though not without

¹ That this is no exaggeration can be seen if the contemporary press reports are consulted concerning the reception in the spring of 1928 accorded by the Italian, French, and British Governments to King Amanullah of Afghanistan.

² Lindbergh was already a Captain in the Officers' Reserve, but it was as a civilian that he flew the Atlantic.

notable exceptions, gave to the war in the name of Christianity, has tended to stifle any frank and thoroughgoing examination of war in the light of Christian principle; with the result that the average Churchman of all denominations never faces the issue, and instead falls back upon the vague hope that war will never happen again—at least in his lifetime! If it should occur, however, it is one of those regrettable necessities which Christian people must of course accept as part of the terrible but heroic and splendid duty which their religion lays upon them. Meantime, it is as well to take no chances in a world where enemies abound, and so the obvious task of the Christian citizen is to encourage the government of his country to “trust in God and keep its powder dry,” or do whatever may be the modern equivalent of that time-honoured maxim.

Such an attitude, however, would not be so easy if Christian people would get behind illusion to reality, and then honestly check the reality in the light of Christ's authority. For while no one will question the heroism of the battle-field, yet this alone is not enough to give the processes of war a Christian character or to make them compatible with the will of God in Jesus Christ. It is essential in this connection not to be misled by terms that are loosely applied. For instance, the glory and splendour of death for the sake of one's country has been, and still is, a familiar appeal in the justification of war; and the fact that the Cross of Christ is centred in the sacrifice of death is frequently taken as establishing an equation

between Calvary and the battle-field. During the Great War one of the most familiar cartoons issued for the consolation of Christian parents, suddenly bereaved by the death of their sons in action, depicted Jesus, with the marks of His wounds still visible, bending over the dying warrior and bestowing His blessing. No word should be uttered which in any wise seems to depreciate the element of sacrifice in the soldier's deed ; for no man can engage in war without the knowledge that for him it may involve the surrender of life or limb, the loss of sight or reason, the permanent impairing of health, and must in any case involve intense and agonising strain upon nerve and physique, even if it does not actually issue in wounds and bodily suffering. All this the soldier faces in a spirit of true sacrifice, and it is this which ennobles his calling and gives to it a certain religious value. But to think of war thus in terms of self-sacrifice is at best only a half-truth ; for we befool ourselves when we represent the essence of war as a willingness to die or to sacrifice oneself. Before all else, war involves on the part of the soldier a readiness to kill and to sacrifice not self but others ; and only as we face that fact do we rightly assess its moral quality. If war were waged solely on the principle of *self*-sacrifice, there might be martyrdom, but there could be no battle. Here is the confession of a Canadian soldier after his first experience of battle: he had been an active member of a Bible Class in his home church in Alberta, and had volunteered for the first

battalion of infantry to be raised in 1914: he shared the usual illusions about war, and then in France in a trench raid he killed his first man. Do our Christian apologists for war consider what they do to the souls of young men when they send them out to fight? Then let them read this: "On our return to our trench," says this Canadian, "some of us immediately fell asleep; some smoked nervously or tried to read: others commenced writing letters, and I among these. . . . Dear Mother, I began to write my letter. Then I stopped and wrote no more. Stealing over me came the thought of another mother, not British, but German. I imagined my mother getting an official telegram, 'killed in action.' I shuddered. I wondered if the young German who had fallen to my bayonet were an only son and if he were as loved as I. . . . I had killed a man, . . . and for the first time I doubted what I had been taught, and with my teachings I doubted the Bible. Could I have talked with some one to show me a clear way out, a road out, as my whole spiritual world began to crumble! Pray, pray, I said to myself, and how much I did want to pray. But what could I say to God to square myself? Then I attempted a prayer, but never finished. O God, I have killed a man, a Christian man like myself. O God! Why, God, he may have been a Methodist like myself. God, I don't want to kill any more of Thy children! There I stopped. We were all God's children. Three of my own comrades had also been killed. A thought flashed across my mind,

and with bludgeon blows kept hammering at me—Fool! No one asked you to come here to kill: you volunteered for duty, and duty is to kill, kill, kill, until you yourself are killed! Again I thought—There is only one God; He is neither German nor British, and has nothing to do with this wholesale murdering. . . . As these thoughts persisted, it became apparent to me that something was wrong.”¹

The civilian apologist for war is generally loth to admit what this Canadian soldier asserts as to the emphasis upon killing in war, but at least the military man is under no such illusion. In the debate on military punishment in the House of Commons on 12th April 1923, a military member, supporting the retention of the death-penalty on active service, stated his own experience in these words: “War was an extremely bloody business, and they must remember that when all was said and done it was a soldier’s job to kill!” When the United States of America entered the War in 1917, and the first American troops landed in England, a service of dedication was held in St Paul’s Cathedral. The Stars and Stripes were unfurled, and Julia Ward Howe’s “Battle Hymn of the Republic” was sung,

“As He died to make men holy,
Let us die to make men free.”

But if that vast congregation had been asked to sing (what indeed was the actual truth), “Let us

¹ Harold R. Peat on *What the War did to my Mind*, in the *Christian Century*, 26th April 1928.

kill to make men free," the whole concourse would have been shocked and horrified. Yet, robbed of its glamour, that is what war is! Even in time of war, however, the comfortable illusion was cultivated by the civilian population that killing was a quite secondary and subordinate element in battle, and Press and people alike spoke habitually as though war, so far at least as their own soldiers were concerned, was always and entirely a display of *self-sacrifice*.

But there are also other elements in war, besides the act of organised killing, which need to be taken into account if we would properly assess its moral quality and escape the illusions which surround the subject. Something will be said in the following chapter of the nature of war on what has been called "the home front"—its reaction upon the common contacts of civilian life and its contempt for all the elementary moralities of human relationship. But here we confine our analysis to the battle front.

Mr Winston Churchill is our authority for the statement that in the Great War "every outrage against Humanity or International Law was repaid by reprisals often on a greater scale and of longer duration."¹ They are short memories which do not recollect how the first air-raids over London were greeted with horror-stricken condemnation by the British public: the German airmen were denounced as "baby-killers" who made war on women and children, and the whole proceedings were stigmatised as at once un-British

¹ *The World Crisis*, by Winston Churchill.

and un-Christian. Yet within a month the honourable protest of the Archbishop of Canterbury had been silenced, and reprisals upon the Rhineland cities were part of the regular British (and presumably Christian !) retort to the attacks upon London. The German Chancellor was held up to the scorn of the civilised world when in 1914 he justified the invasion of Belgium on the ground of "military necessity," but as the war proceeded it became clear that this same necessity governed each and all of the belligerents ; for in war every consideration is perforce subordinate to the attainment of victory : no scruples must be allowed to intervene ; and when once the determination of an issue is made to depend upon violence, the overpowering of the enemy becomes the dominating objective. Hence the moral, social, and physical well-being of men counts as nothing if it conflicts with this objective : as any army manual indicates, moral considerations are not only irrelevant, they are an intrusion when military requirements are at stake. That is to say, an army is impossible unless the soldier in certain particulars surrenders his moral judgment, his conscience, his will, to the discretion of his military superior ; for it has to be remembered that the soldier—at least in the less exalted ranks—is denied the option of resignation which belongs everywhere to civil life when conscience and the command of a superior conflict. In war, law—whether moral or statute—ceases to count, the Sermon on the Mount is an impertinence, the end justifies the means, and the well-being of

neither friend nor foe weighs as against victory. In civil life, any man who acted according to the so-called "ethics of war" would be outlawed from decent society, and, even if he did not speedily find himself behind prison bars, he would be regarded universally as (in Theodore Roosevelt's phrase) an "undesirable citizen." But such is the moral perversion of war that the very vices of civil life become the virtues of military life.

This fact becomes tragically apparent if we take note of the way in which the ordinary decencies of human intercourse are treated in war. Take chivalry, for instance. For centuries the illusion has been cherished that the man under arms is the embodiment of all that is chivalrous towards both friend and foe: in the traditional stories of armoured knighthood he appears as the defender of womanhood, the rescuer of fair ladies, the champion of the helpless; and to these same noble qualities war still makes its appeal; for in every war the cry is raised, "women and children in danger." But when in response to this appeal the recruit has been trained, what does he find? Where, for example, is chivalry towards one's foes to be found in this piece of advice, taken from a military manual for use in the United States Army? "Bayonet fighting is possible only because red-blooded men naturally possess the fighting instinct. This inherent desire to fight and kill must be carefully watched for and encouraged by the instructor. To finish an opponent who hangs on, or attempts to pull you

to the ground, always try to break his hold by driving the knee or foot to his crotch and gouging his eyes with your thumbs. Men still have fight in them unless you hit a vital spot. But when the bayonet comes out and the air sucks in and they begin to bleed on the inside, they feel the pain and lose their fight.”¹

If anyone wishes to know something of the way in which war cancels out chivalry towards women, he can do no better than read the history of the Contagious Diseases Acts, or of the long heroic struggle of Josephine Butler to secure the abolition of *maisons tolérées* in British Army quarters. To suggest that war either defends or respects womanhood is one of those persistent lies by which a foul and hideous immorality is made to appear respectable. Chivalry in its true and Christian sense never has been, and never can be, associated with a process which segregates vast bodies of men from their own womenkind and encourages the beast in human nature to run loose; and it is significant that in time of war licensed prostitution and other sexual abominations associated with the Contagious Diseases Acts invariably reappear under official sanction and control. The public at home is not told these things while a war is in progress, and it is not pleasant to speak of them when a war is

¹ Quoted in *The World To-morrow*, New York, February 1926. In response to protests by sensitive people who dislike to face facts, the paragraph has been modified in later editions of the Manual, but this classic remains as a revelation of war's chivalry in dealing with an opponent.

over ; but if we are rightly to assess the moral quality of war the unsavoury facts of army immorality have to be taken into account as one of the things which make war what it is. Signor Nitti, ex-premier of Italy, has said, " the losses in human life and property, great as they are, are small evils compared to the undermining of morals and the lowering of standards of culture and civilisation." ¹ Mr Sherwood Eddy tells how he held evangelistic meetings during the war in camps and hospitals. " In one place," he says, " the commanding officer informed me that over 80,000 men had been down with venereal disease in that one hospital alone." ² Prophylaxis against venereal disease was part of the regular provision of some of the armies on active service ; and, according to an eye-witness who refers to the long strain of the war on the troops, " the authorities began to give frequent leave and to encourage the boys either openly or tacitly to ' find a woman ' and get thoroughly satisfactorily drunk." ³ At the close of the Great War Sir Philip Gibbs wrote a book under the title, *Now it can be Told* ; but the standing difficulty about the nature of war is that not one-tenth of its revolting bestialities and immoralities can ever be told ; for, fortunately or otherwise, language is too weak and ineffective a medium to describe

¹ *The Decadence of Europe*, by Nitti.

² *The Case Against War*, by Sherwood Eddy.

³ *The Next War*, by Will Irwin. This refers, of course, only to that portion of the front under the witness's observation, and it would be unfair to regard it as a generalisation.

a process at once so complex, so mean and filthy and cowardly, and so stark and ugly in its moral aspect, and yet in certain other of its aspects so splendid and heroic.

When, however, we bring war to the test of the authority of Christ, it is not *one* of its aspects, but the thing as it is in its *every* aspect, which must be subject to our scrutiny. When Christian people justify the way of the battle-field, they justify courage and loyalty and devotion and self-sacrifice ; but they also endorse destruction and violence and meanness and immorality, and every item in the gamut of human vice ; and the problem has to be faced as to whether or not this can be done in the name of Jesus Christ and with the sanction of our Christian faith.

But war in the modern world is a process in which the civilian as well as the soldier has a part, and the "home front," therefore, must be considered before we turn to the relation between War and Christianity.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE OF WAR (b) ON THE HOME FRONT

THE waging of war in days not very far behind us used to be a matter of comparatively small professional armies directed by governments which—even when functioning under the forms of democracy—were in practice oligarchical and not too intimately dependent upon the peoples they governed. During the Great War we learnt with astonishment, almost with incredulity, and with a certain degree of amusement, that a trapper in the Canadian Yukon was unaware of the events which were shaking the world until late in 1918 he hit the trail for Dawson City, and there heard that a four-years' conflict had taken place, and that the victorious Allies were drafting terms of peace. But in days gone by, in the remoter parts of all the countries of Europe, this must have been a common experience with great sections of the community, even during the Napoleonic Wars when all Europe was aflame. Goethe went on with his literary work, undisturbed in body and in mind, though actually living within a few miles of the Franco-German frontier: the waging of war was to him merely a minor disturbance amid the absorbing problems

of human life. So too, in the same period, there is singularly little awareness of war's alarms in the records of the Evangelical Revival which was then sweeping through England, and men were free to devote their thought and energy to the things of the Spirit, undeterred by those political and military upheavals which dominate the history of that age. Even when the populace was aware of such things, the interest was sporadic ; for wars were protracted over ten, fifteen, or twenty years, and the critical battles which determined the fate of empires and changed the map of the world were infrequent and comparatively small affairs. There is significance in the fact, for instance, that only about 20,000 British troops took part in the Battle of Waterloo, and far less than that number in the remoter conflicts of Crecy and Agincourt. War was then merely one department of State activity, and was the concern of the statesman rather than of the people as a whole. Even as late in British history as the Boer War, at the end of the nineteenth century, the conflict after the first few months failed to dominate public interest, and, as the newspapers of that date indicate, the ordinary activities of trade and sport and politics retained their place as the leading concerns of the day.

But nowadays all that has changed. The application of scientific invention has made modern war no longer a matter of strategic manœuvring punctuated by occasional battles, but a sustained and intensive conflict under conditions of permanent entrenchment, and from which there

is no release day or night, in season or out of season. Where in bygone days cities were beleaguered, now whole nations are reduced by blockade and starvation: moreover, the advent of aircraft has carried the actual clash of battle far beyond the zone of the contending armies, and the civilian population is brought within the orbit of bombardment and destruction formerly confined to the military forces. A "next war," should it occur, will intensify and still further widen the area of such operations; so that it has been surmised that the safest place in such a war would be the army, while enemy aircraft on both sides would have as their objective the sudden and speedy obliteration of the home bases by which the armies are maintained, and the infliction of defeat by destroying both the civilisation and the morale of the opposing nation or nations. The fact that, as has been indicated, the process would be mutual and that both sets of combatants would go down in a common ruin, only gives added point to the truth that modern war is waged not only on a battle front, but quite as much—or indeed even more so—on what is known as the home front.

This fact has an important bearing upon the nature of war, especially in its moral aspect; and it is something which ought not to be omitted from consideration when we test the processes of war by the authority of Christ. For since modern war touches the whole populace, it is necessary for the war-maker to-day to enlist the assent and consent of the citizenry generally, not

only to the initial declaration of war, but still more to the prosecution of war, despite the suffering and disaster which fall upon the civilian population as an inevitable price of an appeal to arms. In the familiar jargon which became current during the Great War, the "morale of the people" must be maintained at all costs; and it is in pursuing this end that modern war reveals some of its ugliest features. Yet, if war is to be endorsed and supported, these features must be included among the things we approve; for ultimately means and end are one, and he, therefore, who wills the end which the act of war seeks to secure, also wills the dreadful means by which war is carried—as the ironic phrase has it—to "a successful conclusion."

Chief among the activities of the home front in time of war is the deliberate debauching of the public mind by means of both official and unofficial propaganda. In various ways mob psychology is exploited; for—as the stories both of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and of the final German collapse in 1918 demonstrate—a modern war stops the moment that popular passion cools below fever heat. This is so well understood both by the military as well as the civil authorities that immediate steps are taken to prevent—or to stifle if it arises—any kind of *rapprochement* or fraternisation either between the warring peoples or between the troops on the opposing sides. It is a crime punishable by fine and imprisonment to write a letter, even of the most innocuous kind, to a friend belonging to a nation

with which one's own nation is at war. Direct postal facilities, of course, cease to exist, but even communication through neutrals is forbidden: for this purpose a strict censorship is instituted, and private correspondence for places beyond the frontier is scrutinised and mutilated by an army of elderly clerks who are too old or too infirm to fight. It is called "doing one's bit," and the fact that it is a task subversive of the accepted decencies of human intercourse does not make it any the less respectable or even laudable in time of war. The late Mr E. D. Morel, the outspoken critic of the Congo régime under King Leopold of Belgium, wrote in 1917 a letter to his friend, M. Romain Rolland, in Switzerland, and suggested the possibility of getting the interest of certain anti-militarist groups in Germany in securing an honourable peace by negotiation. Whether the actual suggestion was wise or practicable is not to the point: the nature of war on the home front is shown by the sequel; for, convicted of the crime of desiring a cessation of human slaughter, Mr Morel was sentenced to six months' hard labour. The will to fight had to be maintained, no matter what happened to peace-loving citizens!

By such a statement no reflection is intended or implied upon the sincerity of the statesmen responsible for the conduct of any given war: by the very terms of their deepest convictions, a war must be fought to a finish; and a conflict, therefore, which threatens to stop half-way because enemies across the frontiers or on the

field become friends is a betrayal of the very cause for which war is undertaken. There was one very significant illustration of this state of mind comparatively early in the progress of the Great War. The Press censorship had not become very rigid by the end of 1914, and it was still deemed not inconsistent with patriotism or with an effective prosecution of the War to allow accurate reports from the battle-front to appear in print: consequently, it was known generally that on the first Christmas Day of the War an unofficial truce was called between the British and German troops on certain sections of the front: the trench parapets were lined with candles, and Christmas-trees were placed in position here and there along the line: "no man's land," between the lines, which was usually a graveyard, became alive with groups in which khaki and field-grey were indiscriminately mixed: chocolate and the ubiquitous cigarette were freely exchanged for samples of German rations, and the soldiers discovered that the "enemy" consisted of men "of like passions with themselves." Such was the story carried by the Press in England. But suddenly the news changed: the men were back in the trenches, periscopes took the place of candles, and rifles glinted where the Christmas-trees had stood. Something had happened to change friendliness back into enmity. Sir Ian Hamilton has told us what it was in his book, *The Friends of England*. "Under cover of the battle smoke," he says, "many of the rank and file had made an effort to hold out to one

another blood-stained hands. Once even, the Anglo-Saxons and the Saxons had come to a tacit understanding that they would not kill each other on Christmas Day : so they actually mingled and sang hymns and songs. 'This shows a feeling which we must stamp out as if the house was catching fire,' said a certain high official at my table ; and duly the feeling was stamped out !" Behind that final observation lay the deliberate transfer of the fraternising troops to other sectors ; for it was discovered that where men had mingled as fellow-creatures and brothers, they could not be induced to obey the order to fire or to treat a "brother" as an "enemy." So "duly the feeling of comradeship was stamped out" in order that the fratricide of war might proceed ! Rumour has it that the "high official" whom Sir Ian Hamilton quotes is now a well-known politician ; but the point to be observed is that it was not the exigencies of battle, but those of statecraft which required the ending of the Christmas truce. It was war on the home front, not on the battle front, which thus foreclosed the possibility of substituting a universal handshake for universal strife.

It has been said that "the first casualty in war is Truth," and certainly the history of war-time propaganda justifies that dictum ; for no one can even dip into the record of carefully disseminated fictions and slanders and falsehoods without recognising that the cynic did not exaggerate when he said that "propaganda is a longer way of spelling *lie*." Yet, so long as a war is in

progress, even to question the accuracy of any statement discreditable to the enemy people is to incur the odium of being dubbed a traitor or worse. Canon Lyttelton had the courage in the autumn of 1914 to admit, when pressed for particulars, that a statement to which he had given currency as to the "crucifixion" of a Canadian soldier by the Germans was based merely upon hearsay, and immediately there arose the cry that such want of patriotism made him unfit to continue as headmaster of Eton. Cause and effect may not have been so closely associated as the public was led to believe, but it was not long before Canon Lyttelton had retired and Eton had another head! Lord Morley, in recalling his own attitude during a previous war, says: "Argument has little chance after war has once got under full way. As John Adams put it in 1776: 'a torrent is not to be impeded by reasoning, nor a storm by ridicule.' That is the worst of war; it ostracises, demoralises, brutalises Reason: . . . hate takes root as a tradition, and lasts."¹ In other words, war on the home front is stimulated and maintained, not at the demand of a calm dispassionate judgment applied to the issue before the nations, but at the behest of an unreasoning passion which is blind to every consideration except the achievement of victory.

It is the task of propaganda to maintain this passion at white heat, for without it the people will tire of the conflict and seize a too early opportunity of peace. The diatribes by politicians,

¹ Lord Morley, *Recollections*, vol. 2.

Press, and even preachers during the Great War against what was called "war weariness" were an evidence of the nervousness of the leaders of public opinion lest the battle should be drawn before the enemy was defeated. Hence, every suggestion for the conclusion of hostilities—especially if the initiation of such suggestion could be traced to the other side—was contemptuously described as a "peace trick": so too kaisers and kings and presidents and prime ministers, to say nothing of lesser political lights, in every country buoyed up the *moral* of their people by extravagant prospects of imminent victory, even though—as post-war confessions have revealed¹—they were well aware of the stubborn stalemate on the battle front. The fighting instinct and the determination to hang on at all costs were fed, as the war proceeded, by baser and ever baser appeals: a British statesman played up to the sporting instinct by using the vernacular of the ring, and exhorted his hearers to "fight to a finish," until they had administered a "knock-out blow": the Germans retorted by their "Hymn of Hate"; in order to stimulate the evil passions upon which war feeds, a medal was struck in Munich to celebrate the sinking of the Cunard liner, the *Lusitania*, by a German submarine.² The humorous weeklies and

¹ See, in particular, *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Page's *Life and Letters*, Lord Grey of Fallodon's *Twenty-five Years*, and other volumes dealing with war-time politics.

² This, however, was not an official act, as alleged in England at the time, but a piece of private enterprise in the task of propaganda: see Ponsonby's *Falsehood in War Time* for particulars.

the cartoonists of every country represented the enemy group of nations as vermin too loathsome to be treated with anything less than extinction, and the music, the literature, the art, indeed the entire civilisation of the enemy was held up to contempt as something lower than the crudest savagery.

These things were partly effect and partly cause: they were the natural reaction of war upon the beast which is always latent in human nature, while on the other hand they were deliberately used and fostered by those in authority in order to cultivate the war-temper, and so make it possible for statesmen to realise the ideal of victory which they were convinced was necessary to their country's weal.¹ If the enemy,

¹ The demoralising effect of war upon the civil population is seen in every age: an appeal to violence means the abdication of reason and all the common decencies of human intercourse on the part of those who endorse the appeal to arms. Consider, as a typical example, the lot of the "loyalists" during the American War of Independence. Professor George M. Wrong tells the story in his *History of Canada*: "It is likely that the sympathies of at least one-third of the colonists were with the British side. But . . . we hear of Loyalist clergymen dragged from their pulpits and maltreated; of Loyalists who were whipped through the streets and had their ears cropped; of other Loyalists covered with tar and then rolled in feathers taken from their own beds, or held astride of the sharp edge of a rail and made to take a rough ride which involved acute pain: or held under water and brought to the surface to breathe and then ducked again: or tied roughly to a post, with some dead animal dangling beside them. . . . Even the mild Washington said that the best thing the Loyalists could do was to commit suicide. John Adams, who became the second President of the United States, said that they ought to be hanged:

however was represented as all-black, the Allies were all-white (or all whitewash in some cases !): they were invariably "our noble allies," fighting disinterestedly in the cause of liberty and culture and civilisation, even though behind the scenes the statesmen of every country were signing secret treaties¹ agreeing to the partition of enemy empires on the principle of "the spoil to the victors." Thus, Russia was to have Constantinople (the Tsar, despite his Siberian brutalities, was then the "noble ally" of Britain and France), France and Britain were to carve up the Asiatic empire of Turkey; or, on the other side, Germany and Turkey were to swallow, if they could not digest, large slices of Russia. Such agreements, when from time to time the secrets leaked out, were justified as part of the price of holding a military alliance together, and the peoples for the most part were so intoxicated by "propaganda" that they still acknowledged the "nobility" of allies who thus needed to be bribed into loyalty or paid for their disinterested services! These facts are not recalled for the sake of reproach but in the interests of a true diagnosis of war. Admittedly, a statesman responsible for the conduct of a war

Benjamin Franklin, the grave philosopher, had no pity on them. . . . Even after the war, the bitterness against them was frantic. In hell, wrote one versifier, the most evil spirits would turn in loathing from an Englishman: George III., to whom the Loyalists adhered, was a crowned ruffian, his statesmen were scoundrels, his sailors were pirates, and his people were degraded slaves."

¹ The text of those treaties is now published in a little volume by F. Seymour Cocks, entitled, *The Secret Treaties*.

is in a position where desperate expedients have to be adopted, even though they go against the grain ; for when once victory is the supreme objective nothing can be allowed to stand in its way. But it is precisely this fact which gives to war on the home front its characteristic nature, and which therefore must be taken into account when we assess its moral quality or bring it under the judgment of Christ.

Yet it was not only in large issues of political policy that the demoralisation of war was seen in the years 1914-18. The story of official propaganda during the Great War is at times so mean and petty, and at the same time so vindictive, as to make it almost unbelievable that sane and normally honourable men and women could stoop to it. Again the motive is not questioned ; but it is part of the essential nature of war that the finest motives must always be betrayed by the actual processes which are necessary to the prosecution of war : in war, whether on the battle front or on the home front, the best of men must always contradict by his methods the very motive that impelled him to resort to war. So it comes to be, not only that truth is sacrificed and evil passion inflamed ; but falsehoods are purposely invented and circulated ; the vocation of the spy, the eavesdropper, the decoy, becomes an honourable calling : devices which would be spurned with contempt in time of peace are the accepted canons of respectable folk ; and the whole of civil life is honeycombed with suspicion and mutual fear. The British War Office, and pre-

sumably all others, freely used *agents provocateurs* in its endeavour to entangle those who were deemed to be too critical of its doings or not sufficiently ardent in support of a fight to a finish. Mr Ramsay Macdonald, at that time Treasurer of the Labour Party, had to complain in the House of Commons of the unwelcome attentions of such creatures ; and the present writer was one of several whom the authorities sought to trap into utterances or actions which could be construed as "seditious." On one occasion two decoys, thinly disguised as clerics, endeavoured to secure from him encouragement in dodging the Military Service Acts, which would immediately have been laid as evidence on a charge of violating the Defence of the Realm Act. The attempt failed, however, for it is no part of a Christian peace witness to urge others to act upon convictions which they do not hold ; and the essence of Christian liberty is freedom to go wrong as well as right. To challenge another man's conscience and call him to face the nature of war as a Christian is one thing, to prescribe his duty in the light of some one else's conscience is another ; and even in time of war there were English magistrates who recognised the distinction and, despite a good deal of public opprobrium, acted upon it.

The *agent provocateur*, however, had other tasks to perform than impersonation. He attended meetings, and even religious services, and took voluminous notes : and he raided houses, offices, and public buildings, to discover letters, papers, or books which might justify prosecution. Igno-

rant men for the most part filled this unworthy rôle, and sometimes this ignorance led to an intriguing situation; as for example when a list of books seized by the police included *Mill on Liberty*, and then immediately underneath, *Ditto on the Floss*! The climax was reached, however, when 20,000 copies of the Sermon on the Mount (printed without comment as a leaflet) were ordered by a magistrate in Leeds to be destroyed as seditious literature, and their would-be distributor was committed to jail under a sentence of three months' hard labour.¹ The War Office and the Bench knew, if the Church did not, that war and the Sermon on the Mount could not co-exist!

But that is to anticipate the theme of the next chapter. This chapter may be brought to a close with a few further illustrations of the nature of war, as typified by the propaganda of 1914-18.²

¹ The question of publishing Biblical quotations was raised in the House of Commons, and Mr J. M. Robertson replied on behalf of the Government by saying, "If the Sermon on the Mount, or any other portion of any other sacred book, were used for the deliberate purpose of preventing men from enlisting or accepting enlistment, that would be a military offence." (*Hansard*, 29th June 1916.) The implication is, of course, clear; "accepting enlistment" will not square with the Sermon on the Mount!

The following from the *Labour Leader*, 14th January 1915, is also significant, "We submitted for publication without comment a number of quotations from the Bible, and these . . . were struck out by the Censor."

² The illustrations are confined to the activities of the Allies in the Great War, not because similar things did not occur among the Central Powers, but because to an English writer the former are necessarily more accessible and familiar. For a well-documented and impartial examination of methods of pro-

A personal recollection may be permitted in this connection, as a minor but hitherto unpublished episode in the annals of statesmanship. While the United States was still neutral, the writer was in temporary charge of a church in Brooklyn, New York, and certain of his remarks concerning the treatment of conscientious objectors in England came to the notice of Sir Cecil Spring Rice, who was then filling the difficult position of British Ambassador in Washington: a correspondence ensued in which the Ambassador charged the writer with deliberate falsification of facts in asserting that thirty-three men (many of them Quakers) had been sentenced to death by a British court-martial in France for refusal to don khaki: the matter had been raised in the House of Commons, and the moral sense of Britain had revolted against the execution of the sentence, with the result that it was commuted to ten years' penal servitude. A copy of *Hansard* was forwarded to the Ambassador with a joint letter by the writer and Professor Rufus Jones of Haverford, Pennsylvania, pleading for his influence in a matter which was then—just when President Wilson was re-elected on a peace programme—prejudicing American feeling against Britain. *Hansard* showed that the court-martial was held on 15th June 1916, and the issue was raised in Parliament on 22nd and 26th June. The Ambassador gave his consent to the publication of this joint letter, and it appeared in the *Philadelphia* paganda in every belligerent country, see *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, by Prof. Lasswell.

Ledger of 8th December 1916; this consent was contained in a hand-written letter to the writer by the Ambassador himself, in which he generously apologised for misunderstanding, affirmed his previous ignorance of the facts, and frankly expressed his sense of shame that his country should be guilty of such treatment towards some of its best citizens. He stated, however, that he had unfortunately already reported the whole matter to the Foreign Office in London. That, of course, under war-time conditions, meant but one thing: and the writer was therefore not surprised when on arrival in England he was promptly arrested and all his papers seized. Nothing incriminating was found by Scotland Yard, and at the end of six weeks everything was returned, *except the Ambassador's letter*. The British public was not to know that there was sympathy in high quarters with men who would not fight! For the successful conduct of a war, the illusion of complete unanimity must be maintained!

The manipulation of news was another device by which the war mood was maintained, and to this end anything which blackened the character of the enemy was good copy. Professor G. Lowes Dickinson has collected the following significant sequence of Press reports,¹ which well illustrate the manner in which the peoples were at once fooled and embittered by journalists doing the bidding of their governments in the task of

¹ *The Power of the Press for Peace and War*, published by the National Council for Prevention of War, Washington, U.S.A.

propaganda. In the *Cologne Zeitung*, in September 1914, it was reported that "when the fall of Antwerp was known the church bells were rung" (*i.e.* in Cologne). A few days later this appeared in the *Paris Matin* thus: "According to the *Cologne Zeitung*, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken." The *London Times* then copied and improved the report by saying: "According to what the *Matin* has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been driven away from their places." Italy went one better, and the *Corriere della Sera* of Milan published this: "According to what the *Times* has heard from Cologne via Paris, the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been sentenced to hard labour." But it was left to the *Paris Matin* to add the supreme touch of imagination and falsehood by saying: "According to information to the *Corriere della Sera* from Cologne via London, it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them as living clappers to the bells with their heads down."

In view of the above example of propaganda by legend, it is not surprising to learn that while Britain and France were full of tales of German "frightfulness," Germany was no less full of stories of Allied "atrocities." Nothing is to be

gained by minimising the appalling frightfulness of war, and German military theory undoubtedly intensified it as a deliberate policy: fortunately for the Allies, the opportunity of invasion never tempted them to similar extremes; but one had only to listen in England to the diabolical hate of all things German to recognise that if the opportunity was lacking the will was there: it was a commonplace to hear ordinarily good and humane men and women, incited by atrocity stories, urge a policy of measure for measure, or "do as we are done by," only more so. No one can possibly assess the infinite moral damage done by the orgy of hate and ill-will, without which no war can be carried through. This is not incidental to war on the home front, it is essential to it, and is of its intrinsic nature: human flesh and blood, to say nothing of the human soul, would weary of the whole ghastly business, were it not for the carefully calculated infusion of evil passion by the official propaganda departments of every government involved.

Some frank confessions of this fact have been made by men "in the know," since the close of the Great War. Admiral Sims, for instance, who was United States Naval Commander during the War, said in an interview:¹ "One of the sacrifices that people must necessarily make during war time is of an accurate knowledge of events. You have got to keep many facts from your own people to keep them from the enemy. It would be extremely unpatriotic for a newspaper to tell

¹ *New York Tribune*, June 1923.

the absolute truth about what is taking place during a war, even if the newspaper could get the absolute truth.”¹ The sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine came as a shock in 1915 even to people already inured to daily reports of war-time horrors, but propaganda saw to it that the deed should seem even darker than it was; for it was persistently asserted in the British Press that the vessel was a harmless merchantman, with nothing aboard that was contraband according to the so-called laws of war. Yet on 9th May 1915, the *New York Times*² printed a statement by Mr Herman Winter, Assistant Manager of the Cunard Line, that the *Lusitania* on her fatal voyage carried 4200 cases of cartridges! The truth, however, was not allowed to appear in England. In 1922, at a public dinner in New York,³ a gentleman who was one of the correspondents of the *London Daily Mail* in Belgium during the German

¹ Admiral Sims in the same interview went on to give a few enlightening particulars: he stated for instance that “there was no authentic record of an atrocity ever having been perpetrated by the commander and crew of a German submarine, and the Press accounts of the terrible atrocities were nothing but propaganda.” When challenged by correspondents nurtured on war-time fables, the Admiral stuck to his point by declaring: “I stated that, barring the case of the hospital ship, *Llandoverly Castle*, I did not know of any case where a German submarine commander had fired upon the boats of a torpedoed vessel, and that the submarine commanders generally acted in a humane manner.”

² America, of course, was not then in the War.

³ Reported in the *New York Times* and quoted in the *London Crusader*, 24th February 1922.

advance of August 1914, confessed with glee how he had invented the widely circulated story of the Belgian child whose hands were cut off after its father and mother had been killed. So much pity and indignation were excited by the story that offers poured into the *Daily Mail* office for the adoption of the child: the editor wired the correspondent to bring the child to England, and he promptly laid the child low with an attack of typhoid. Finally Queen Alexandra offered to provide for the child, and as things were becoming embarrassing for the correspondent, he wired that the victim of atrocity had succumbed to shock and fever! But the lie which the correspondent circulated appeared as part of the Bryce Report on German atrocities, and it had a long and evil life, and left behind it a trail of blood and hate, before it succumbed under the blaze of the unexpected truth!

A particularly brazen case of propagandist falsehood, with enormous consequences of loathing and ill-will, was the statement, accompanied by photographs, that the Germans were in the habit of sending their dead to a "cadaver factory," where corpses were turned into the commercial fat of which Germany was then in sore need. General Charteris, as reported in the *New York Times* and other papers, has now told how the story was invented and the photographs added. He was its author: he happened to have two pictures, one showing the removal of dead horses to the "cadaver factory," and the other showing the removal of dead soldiers for burial. He very

simply changed the titles, and then forged a German diary and placed this in the pocket of a dead German, where his men found it.¹

A catalogue of war lies masquerading under the name of propaganda would make an interesting study in human gullibility ; but Sir Philip Gibbs, the well-known war correspondent, has anticipated the inevitable verdict upon such a catalogue when he says : " Greedy was the appetite of the mob for atrocity tales, and the more revolting they were the quicker were they swallowed " ; and then he gives it as his judgment that " hatred at home " was " largely inspired by feminine hysteria and official propaganda. " ²

Such, then, are a few—a very few—illustrations of war on the home front. Its weapons are not physical, but psychological : a lie is often far more potent for victory than a bullet ; and since hate and evil thinking among the civil population are essential to the determination which will " fight to a finish, " these things must be encouraged and stimulated as a normal process of war and in the name of " military necessity. " Without them no modern war could be sustained, and no people could be induced to persist either in inflicting or enduring the senseless slaughter of battle. It is thus of the very nature of war that it not only kills the bodies of men, but it also degrades and destroys all that is finest in the soul.

¹ Quoted by H. C. Engelbrecht, article on " How War Propaganda Won, " in *The World To-morrow*, New York, April 1927.

² *Now it can be Told*, by Philip Gibbs.

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

IN a sermon at Geneva during the sessions of the Assembly of the League of Nations, the preacher,¹ who had himself approved the struggle of 1914-18, but had later seen the nature of war both on the home and the battle fronts, declared that "War is the world's greatest collective sin"; and in view of the foregoing analysis of the processes of war, few if any Christian people will dissent from his judgment. The authority of Christ and the nature of war are in sharp and irreconcilable opposition.

We shall not do fairly, however, by those who accept the way of war on occasion as a dire but necessary last resort in international relationship, unless we recognise that the Christian objection is not to the *purpose* which impels good men to war but to the *method* by which that purpose is expressed; for the one contradicts the other. The Christian man professes to be governed in all things by loyalty to the purpose of Jesus Christ; and that purpose can be stated, if in a single word, by the word "Redemption." That is, Jesus sought—here in this world—to over-

¹ Dr Harry Emerson Fosdick of New York.

come the evil in men and to make them at-one with the life of God. To this end, however—as has been pointed out in the chapter on the Authority of Christ—His method varied with circumstance, but was always an expression of His purpose. Thus, on occasion He used persuasion where persuasion was an appropriate weapon ; at other times He used invective of the severest order ; sometimes He dealt with the evil-doer in tenderness, or at other times His sole resort was prayer ; while on at least one occasion that is recorded He did not disdain the use of physical force. But always, whatever means He used, He never foreclosed the possibility of “redeeming” the men and women with whom He was in contact.

This redemptive purpose of Jesus found its supreme expression in Gethsemane and on the Cross. There in the Garden He definitely refused to return injury for injury ; so also He forbade His disciples to meet force with force, not because the use of force was wrong in itself, but because the force then available—the power of the sword—could not be used redemptively ; hence His word to Peter, “Put up thy sword into its place.” Moreover, on the Cross He endured without resentment or retaliation all that the sin of man inflicted, and yet persistently He gave love for hate, good for ill, blessing for cursing ; and this method was adopted in the faith that only so could the hearts of men be touched into response and their ill-will transformed into goodwill. Also it is to be observed that Jesus was not

concerned with Himself alone ; others were dependent on Him for safety, and the very Faith which He had founded was in jeopardy if He succumbed. He even forewarned His followers of suffering, persecution, martyrdom, death, which should fall upon the innocent "for His sake" in a world which had not renounced the way of the sword. Yet, even so, He never raised a finger to prevent the catastrophes which He foresaw ; for to do so would have been to forsake His chosen way of Redemption and to employ weapons incongruous with the way of God's Love.

Other methods than His might (or might not) have prevented the evil *acts* of men, but only the method of Jesus could reach the evil *will* from which all evil acts proceed. No Christian man or woman will question that the story of the centuries has been a vindication of Christ's method in dealing with the world's evil ; for explain it as we will, the Gospel of the Cross has reconciled man to God and man to his neighbour when other methods, and especially the method of war, have merely embittered and alienated and issued in disaster. It was so in the year A.D. 70, when the Jews rejected Christ's Way of Peace and chose instead to wage a "righteous war" against the Roman oppressor ; and it has been so in every century since.

The Christian objection to war therefore is this, that its methods and spirit—though not necessarily its purpose—are opposed to the methods and Spirit of Jesus. Can it seriously be

contended, for instance, that poison-gas, high explosives, air-raids, naval blockades, torpedoes, submarines; stabbing, drowning, mutilating, shooting, or starving the "enemy," are instruments by which Christ's redemptive love is mediated to our fellow-man, woman, or child?

It is not questioned that we may (though equally we may not!) by such means save our own compatriots from suffering and physical disaster; but that is not the issue. Can we by such means love the "enemy"—the personalities who together constitute the "enemy" State—into repentance? Are the several units who compose the "enemy" thereby redeemed from their enmity and made at-one with God and their foes? For nothing less than that fulfils the purpose of God for the Christian man, and nothing else can re-establish the violated "Righteousness of God" by restoring right relationships among men.

It is admittedly not easy to find ways and means of instituting and maintaining these right relationships, especially after war has broken out, and this difficulty will be considered in a subsequent chapter. But at least it is obvious that war itself is not a remedy but an aggravation. The determination to meet and overcome embattled evil registers the Christian's faith in righteousness; but to meet it by the methods of war is not to vindicate righteousness, but the reverse; for it merely adds one set of evils to another, and attempts the impossible task of casting out Beelzebub by the prince of the devils. So the

Christian objection to war is not to be construed as moral indifference in a struggle between right and wrong, but only as a recognition that the righteousness of God cannot be achieved by means which disallow right relationships among men. Christian pacifism is not passivity; it is the active substitution all along the line of the Spirit of Christ for the Spirit of War; and therefore, as with Him, the giving of good for ill, right for wrong, love for hate, blessing for cursing. It is because war makes this impossible that it comes under the ban of many consciences which are nevertheless not yet clear as to an alternative duty.

The pacifist is often accused of making too much of the fact of bloodshed; but that is to misunderstand his protest. Christianity began in bloodshed: but it was the blood of the Redeemer, not the blood of the enemy. Death therefore is not a disaster from the Christian standpoint; the soldier (or the civilian) who dies in war is not thereby beyond the mercy of God or at variance with His purpose: but what of the one who kills, or who urges others to the dreadful task? The act of dying may have a redemptive efficacy; but can the act of killing? Is it not true to say that killing—like all short cuts to moral ends—is a hasty evasion of Christian responsibility? That is to say, killing does not even attempt to solve the knotty problem of meeting and overcoming evil; it merely pushes the problem off on to the hands of God!

Why do the imprecatory Psalms offend the Christian conscience? There is no literature extant which breathes so accurately the very spirit of a "just and righteous war"; but can we at one and the same moment curse the enemy and love him? The same insuperable contradiction emerges if we bring the methods and processes of war to the test of prayer, "in the name of Jesus Christ." Suppose that the actual methods—and not only the exalted purpose—of a defensive war for some high end were made a matter of Christian prayer; suppose those who prayed actually envisaged what war means in terms of blood and tears and immorality and slanderous falsehood and calculated ill-will; could Christian people continue to approve and support these things in the name of Him who died that His enemies might live? The answer cannot be in doubt; for we cannot, in the name of the Saviour of mankind, pray for the destruction of men and the violation of human fellowship.

At the time of the Spanish-American War, Mark Twain, in an article in the *Philadelphia Forum* magazine, satirised the unconscious denial of Christian faith which is always involved in a prayer for victory: such prayers indeed are only possible because Christian people lose sight of the actual processes of war in their devotion to the cause for which the war is fought. Mark Twain pictured the young recruits marching to war, and then the assembly of their elders in the church, where the minister utters a prayer for the triumph of the nation's armies: he puts

into words the unspoken, and the unthought of, implications of every prayer for victory ; and this is what he says :

“ O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them ! With them, in spirit, we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved fire-sides to smite the foe. O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells ; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead ; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the cries of the wounded, writhing in pain ; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire ; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief ; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sport of the sun-flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it ; for our sakes, who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet ! We ask of One who is the Spirit of love, and who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset, and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts. Grant our prayer, O Lord, and

Thine shall be the praise and honour and glory now and ever. Amen."

Every Christian man and woman will feel that there is something blasphemous about a prayer like that: yet it understates rather than overstates the realities of war; for it takes no account of the war-time activities of the home front. To be complete, it ought to seek God's blessing upon lying and slander, hate and ill-will, cruel intolerance in thought and deed. All this and more is implied by a prayer for victory. Then why not use such a prayer? Is it not because we know that we cannot use the name of Jesus Christ for things like that? All of which means that the method of war and the method of Jesus are in irreconcilable conflict; to choose the one is to discard the other. The antithesis indeed may be stated in several ways. The way of war is destructive, of Christ redemptive; war seeks to overcome evil by the infliction of injury on the evil-doer or his agents, Jesus on the Cross by the endurance of the utmost injury that the evil-doer cares to inflict; war treats men as things, Jesus always treated them as living souls capable of responding to the love of God; He sought to kill the enmity where war operates by killing the enemy; Jesus lost the battle in order to win men, while war crushes men in order to achieve victory.

The antithesis, when thus stated, is so plain that the task of justification lies with those who accept war as within the sanctions of Christianity rather than with those who reject it. In other

words, the authority of Christ and the nature of war are so diametrically opposed that the Christian apologist for war is of necessity involved in a fatal contradiction ; in the very act of justification he is bound to deny the very faith he affirms.

CHAPTER VII

SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN POSITION

THESE difficulties have already been indicated in the chapter which stated the problem, and an endeavour must now be made to meet them. The chief of these difficulties arises from the seeming impossibility, in time of war, of prescribing any exact alternative that is not merely supine and inert ; for even if it be admitted that the way of war is not a Christian reaction to aggressive evil in its assault upon the life of the nation, yet a policy of " do-nothing " is equally un-Christian in that it allows evil to have its own way and to triumph without let or hindrance over that which is good. Such for instance seemed to be the case in 1914, when men felt themselves caught in a moral dilemma which led multitudes to choose war as the lesser of two evils. It is necessary to recognise that, *for those who have not accepted the Christian way*, such a position has a large measure of validity : right and wrong are eternal and absolute values implicit in the very nature of the world, but our knowledge of things absolute is conditioned by the exercise of our fallible human judgment ; and hence, in one sense, right and wrong are relative

to our own degree of enlightenment. That is to say, that is right *for us* (though not for anyone else) which we feel to be right at any given moment: wider experience or greater knowledge, or the recognition of other moral standards, may alter our conception of what is right; but until such enlargement of vision occurs, we can do no other as honest men than act upon the vision we already possess. Thus, for instance, so long as men felt slavery to be right (and they did, however incredible it seems to us), they were not to be condemned or censured for holding human beings as chattels; but the moment they awoke to the Christian conception of man as no longer a "thing" to be bought and sold, but a child of God to be respected, then for them the enslavement of their fellows was wrong. The same is true of participation in or the endorsement of war: if a man has not seized the significance of the Christian reaction to aggressive evil as seen in the way of Jesus Christ, it is better to react by the way of war than not to react at all: war in such a case is relatively right for that man. So for a sub-Christian world in general: if it is not aware of any other way than war for meeting embattled evil, it cannot register its moral recoil against evil except by giving battle. In that sense, for the vast majority of people in every land in 1914, war was the "lesser of two evils," and *for them* it was right to fight: to have refrained because of cowardice or self-interest would have been a glaring dereliction of duty in face of a pressing need.

The problem we are considering, however, is not that of a sub-Christian world which has not yet grasped the significance of the Christian way, but that of the Christian man or woman who has already seen the radical opposition between the authority of Christ and the nature of war. Can he or she reconcile the irreconcilable by pleading the world's dilemma of a choice between two evils? Such a plea is, on the face of it, a serious indictment of the providential ordering of the world. On such grounds, for instance, Herod might have justified his murder of John the Baptist, and in a similar way most of the crimes of history could be approved. But no Christian need be caught in such a dilemma; for there is always an exit from a choice of evils by the way of the Cross or its equivalent, if only men have sufficient faith to take it. Compromise with the truth is the only fatal and final disloyalty. But there is never disloyalty in compulsory inertia when the way of active fidelity is closed.

Consider the concrete case of 1914. The dilemma appeared to be either war or failure to honour the moral (and treaty) obligations in regard to Belgium, wantonly attacked by Germany. But a deeper and longer view would have revealed the fact that the real menace to Belgian life lay, not in German aggression, but in something of which Germany at that moment was the supreme type and exponent, namely, men's belief in the legitimacy of armed force. Hence the truest defence, not only of Belgium but of all States, big and little, is to refuse to

sanction such menacing beliefs and to give them no countenance in action. Such refusal may expose the objector to persecution, or in the last resort to martyrdom; but such martyrdom, especially if an entire community were involved in it, would inevitably stir the conscience of mankind, and mark the beginning of the end of war. This suggestion of the redemptive efficacy of a martyrdom was finely worked out by Dr Alexander Mackennal in his Presidential Address to the Free Church Council of England and Wales at Sheffield during the Boer War in the year 1900. He said: "The hardest lesson we have to learn is that a nation which would fulfil the perfect law of Christ may have to give its life for its testimony. For many years the thought has pressed upon me that, if England is to fulfil her noblest destiny, she may be called to be a sacrificial nation; and I have had the dream that the sacrifice might be in the cause of peace. If England, in the plenitude of her power, should lay down every weapon of a carnal warfare, disband her armies, call her fleets from the seas, throw open her ports, and trust for her continued existence only to the service she could render to the world and the testimony she would bear to Christ, what would happen? I know not. . . . It might be that Christ . . . would declare that the purpose of such a sacrifice was sufficient, that the example would be enough, and that the nation would continue to be, living and strong in the gratitude of all peoples. But if otherwise, what then? Such a martyrdom

would quicken the conscience of the world. . . . And of this I am sure : so long as the vision of a nation martyred for Christ's sake appears absurd and impossible, there will never be a Christian nation. This also I believe, that until our advocates of peace apprehend that such a martyrdom may be within the counsel of God, their advocacy will lack its final inspiration and its victorious appeal."

The contention of Dr Mackennal, that readiness to suffer martyrdom for the sake of peace would spell the doom of war, may of course be questioned : it is a prediction born of faith in the Divine order, and assumes—what after all is implicit in every Christian witness—that those who dare the way of the Cross are bound to succeed. But, whether this faith be endorsed or rejected, it at least disposes of the plea that the Christian man must sometimes choose between war and dishonour. Jesus believed that in the struggle with moral evil the way of the Cross was more potent than the way of the sword ; and His followers therefore are justified in finding a similar escape from their dilemmas.

The question was sometimes angrily put to the Christian pacifist during the Great War : "What would you do if you saw a ruffian assaulting your mother?"—to which the apt retort was once made, "I don't know, but I would not go to France to shoot his uncle!" The intrinsic absurdity of war as a method of solving our dilemmas could not be better expressed.

Even, however, if the Christian exit from the

dilemma be not accepted, it is nevertheless a colossal assumption to suggest that war is necessarily the lesser of two evils, even though the alternative evil consists in the breach of some honourable obligation. War itself flourishes upon dishonour, broken treaties, violated promises, lies, deception, and every kind of meanness, deliberately organised into a system ; so that when we are told to choose war as the lesser of two evils, we are asked to honour one promise by allowing the violation of innumerable others. This is surely hardly a convincing reason for failure to abide by the Christian way. Admittedly there is a dilemma ; but it is only by a Christian reaction to the situation that both evils are transcended and both horns of the dilemma escaped.

It is sometimes urged that the exercise of force is the final sanction of all State action, and that therefore to deny the legitimacy of war (by which the State preserves itself from external aggression) is to deny to the State any place in a Christian world-economy. But such a plea fails to recognise that even behind the State's exercise of force there is always the power of public opinion, and that the final sanction of all ordered communal life is consent and not coercion. We see this, for instance, whenever a government which has lost the confidence of the people continues to carry on the administration. This was the case in Ireland prior to the grant of its Dominion status : " all the king's forces and all the king's men " were unable to give currency to the king's writ, when it was not endorsed by the

consent of the populace. The same fact accounts for the periodic anarchy in backward States like the Central American Republics: coercion is not lacking, but without the consent of the governed, ordered national life is impossible.

A more fundamental issue, however, faces the Christian man when it is sought to find a justification for war in the coercive functions of government. For to urge "Reasons of State" (*Salus populi suprema lex*) is to appeal from Christ to Machiavelli, and is to transfer our standard of value from a spiritual entity to a political entity, from Personality to Nationality. But such a process means an inversion of our Christian judgment, or at least its subordination to other and lesser considerations. The State—like many other human institutions (the family, for instance)—comes out of human necessity, and in that sense is divinely ordained; but in the Christian scheme of things all earthly institutions and relationships are subordinate to the supreme relationship of the soul to God, as seen and understood in the Person of Jesus Christ. To deny the legitimacy of war, therefore, from a Christian standpoint is not to exclude the life of the State from our consideration, any more than to deny the legitimacy of duelling is to ignore the life of the individual; it is but to affirm that there are certain State activities (as there are individual activities) which a Christian judgment cannot endorse. Jesus did not deny the legitimacy of family life when He said that under certain circumstances a man may have to "hate"

his father and mother ; and so with the State. What is and what is not permissible to the State, in a Christian sense, cannot in every detail be determined *a priori* ; much, indeed, turns upon the enunciation of a satisfactory Christian doctrine of the State. Such at present does not exist, and even Political Philosophy dare not be too dogmatic ; the defence of war, however, postulates a theory of the State which is finding less and less countenance philosophically. But, in any case, the Christian man cannot wait upon Political Philosophy before deciding his Christian duty in regard to present demands and responsibilities ; that would be to give Philosophy priority over the Gospel, a position which no Christian can admit. All that can be done, therefore, is to consider each particular case as it arises. The State at war—or contemplating war—lays certain demands upon its citizens, and such demands (like all else in human life) must be checked by the Christian and either accepted or rejected, not according to some preconceived theory of the State, but only in the light of the authority of Christ.

Much of the difficulty here arises from confusing an army with a police force, to which reference has already been made. When we see a policeman apprehending a recalcitrant citizen and coercing him in the name of the State, it is easy to assume the right of the State to deal by force of arms with a recalcitrant nation which adopts aggressive tactics towards its neighbours. But such an assumption rests upon a false analogy, and it is

this which misleads us. It has already been pointed out that, in certain vital respects, the methods of an army and those of a police force are fundamentally at variance; but this is also true in regard to the respective objects of military and police activity. If the argument assumed an international authority, dealing impartially with disputing states by means of warlike operations, the analogy with a civil police force would be nearer the mark; but even then it would be inaccurate, for it presumes an equation between the community which needs to be held in check and the individual citizen who may have to be coerced. This equation, however, cannot be established, if we get beneath purely superficial similarities. An individual citizen differs from a nation in two respects which make any exact parallel between them impossible: an individual is a unit, and if he is bent on unsocial action, he can be dealt with as a single wrong-doer; but a nation is a complex entity and never acts as a consolidated unit: within every nation, that is to say, there are diverse elements, some bad and some good, some bent on action inconsistent with international harmony, and some opposed to such action, some militarist and some pacific. A further difference between an individual and a nation is found in the fact that the former is mobile and the latter is not: a citizen can change his place of residence, he can evade the arm of the law by movement within the country, by hiding himself, or by "leaving his country for his country's good": but a nation, as such, has no

power of movement, it is fixed within certain known territorial limits, and it therefore can neither be hidden, nor can it escape the reach of international law by stepping out of the community of nations into another planet where the writ of civilisation does not run. All this means that the methods which may be appropriate and effective in dealing with an individual cannot, by the nature of the case, be applied in dealing with a nation. It is quite obvious, for instance, that a nation cannot be arrested or placed behind prison bars,¹ nor, even were it feasible, is it necessary. For, since a nation is a composite and complex entity, we act in defiance of the facts if we treat it or think of it as a consolidated unit, unanimously playing the part of an international criminal. Yet this is what war always does: the whole of the opposing nation is "the enemy," and no distinction is drawn between the diverse and often conflicting elements within it. If, however, account be taken of this diversity, it will be seen that there is a better and more effective way of dealing with a "criminal nation" than by the act of war: for it is always possible, by a generous and humane foreign policy, to encourage the liberal and pacific elements in another nation and to discourage the predatory and militarist elements. In this way any alleged "criminal"

¹ The ancients actually did something of this kind when a people was taken into captivity, as with the Jews in Babylon; but the numbers were inconsiderable compared with modern communities, and economic considerations in a highly industrialised world make any such process impossible to-day.

intentions are rendered impotent, not by coercion from outside, but by restraint from within the frontiers. An appeal can be made from "Philip drunk to Philip sober."

A simple instance will illustrate. In 1838 the United States and Canada were on the brink of war, on account of the activities of groups of smugglers and raiders on the American side (known as Hunters' Lodges), who hoped thus to provoke a rebellion in Canada which would secure the inclusion of the Dominion (as it has since become) in the American Union. Fortunately for both countries, there were statesmen in Canada who kept their heads under this provocation. Instead, therefore, of replying to the American raids by a declaration of war, they sent an embassy to Washington and induced the non-hostile elements in the United States to deal with the unfriendly action by rousing public opinion against it, and by police action (in the proper sense) on the American side of the border.¹ The fact, already noted, that war in the modern world is always justified in the name of "Defence," gives to this type of appeal more weight than ever before.

¹ The same method has recently—May 1928—been adopted by the United States Government in dealing with the importation of liquor in bulk from Ontario into the prohibitionist territory south of the international line. The best feeling in Canada regards "boot-legging" across the frontier as an unfriendly act; and to this feeling, rather than to threats of force, America has appealed in the endeavour to stop the illicit traffic: the result is a declaration on the part of the Government of Ontario that it will take immediate steps to control the offenders and prevent the exportation of liquor into United States territory.

For no statesman bent upon aggressive designs towards a neighbour nation could possibly induce his people to believe that he was proposing a war of defence, so long as the policy of the other nation was obviously peaceable and reasonable and friendly, and not accompanied by the mobilisation of armed forces or threats of war. Indeed, press the matter far enough, and it is possible to say that a nation which dared to be completely disarmed would be completely safe from the menace of war; for there could be no need to defend one's country from an unarmed foe, and the argument of defence by which war-makers must perforce disguise their designs would be paralysed at the outset. The plea, therefore, that war is a justifiable activity for the Christian, because by it alone can the State preserve itself from external aggression, is invalid not only because it ignores the authority of Christ, but even in the light of political fact and the expediencies of statecraft.

It is in connection with the State that many people find another difficulty in the Christian position; for our citizenship is a fact which is intimately associated with the fact of war. The citizen may be a Christian man, but he is also one of the units which compose the State; and this relationship is therefore often alleged as a justification for participation in war. The position may be stated as follows: The individual cannot contract out of privileges and obligations which are due to his membership of the group (be it family or society or nation) to which he

belongs ; the individual conscience, therefore, must be subordinate to the common weal ; and hence, when the State goes to war, the citizen—whatever his private convictions—must acquiesce and co-operate ! Such a plea, however, rests upon a false opposition ; for there is in fact no such thing as an isolated individual : he is always a social unit, and both his rights and his duties are derived from his relationship to his social context. But that context is not fully comprehended by our citizenship or our place in the State : it is thus not to put the matter correctly, when conscience is represented as individualistic, and as therefore in conflict with the corporate responsibilities of citizenship. The position is only indicated truly when it is recognised that, while I am a citizen of the State, I am also a member of the Church, and a unit in the social-spiritual entity which Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven : I am a child of earth and also a child of God. Then what am I to do if the demands of Cæsar conflict with the demands of Christ ? Suppose two or more social loyalties clash, which, then, is to take precedence ? What is it which—in the view of the apologist for war—gives to the State its super-moral right to override the Christian way ? And if loyalty to the State may qualify my allegiance to Christ, why may not loyalty to my social class, or my Trade Union, or my family, or my Church, or any other group of which I happen to be a member ? The New Testament at least gives no undecided answer : “ We must obey God rather than men,” which means that I must choose the

wider loyalty, *knowing that in the long run the wider welfare will always include the narrower.* That is to say, it is my duty to act as a Christian to the limit of my power, to refuse any method but that of Jesus Christ, and whatever others feel *their* duty to be, be true to mine and leave the consequences in the hands of God. When that principle is applied to the case of war, the logical issue is pacifism, a refusal to engage in or to endorse the methods of war. The Apostles faced the same issue when, in defiance of magisterial demands which conflicted with the authority of Christ, they chose the will of God before the behests of the State. D'Alembert, the French mathematician, indicated the ascending scale of loyalties which bind the Christian man, in the statement, "I prefer my family to myself, I prefer my country to my family, I prefer Humanity to my country." There is no good citizen who would not subscribe to the first two clauses of this statement ; but if these are incontrovertible and axiomatic from a Christian standpoint, so is the final clause. My deepest good can never be secured by the sacrifice of my family to my personal interests, and the same is true of the subordination of my country to my family : it is not a matter of dispute, and need not therefore be argued, that the welfare of the greater always includes the welfare of the less, even though in the process the lesser group outwardly suffers. But the same holds true when a Christian man, in loyalty to the Kingdom of Heaven, refuses to obey the behest of the State in going to war : in

such refusal he is not putting a narrowly personal preference against the claims of society: he is serving the earthly society by seeking to raise it to the level of the heavenly. James Russell Lowell asserted this truth when he resisted the demand of the American Republic on a critical occasion:

“We owe allegiance to the State; but deeper, truer,
more,
To the sympathies which God hath set within our
spirits’ core;
Our country claims our fealty: we grant it so; but then,
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us
men.”¹

We face another and a subtler difficulty of the Christian position when it is alleged that the position of the pacifist in refusing to bear arms or endorse war is an over-simplification of the problem, in that it fails to take account of the enormous complexities of a situation which issues in international conflict. War, it is said, is the outcome of passions and human inter-relationships which precede it, and having been involved in the one we have no right to contract out of the other: we are thus involved in a train of cause and consequence, and hence participation in war is forced upon us as an inescapable result of previous misdoings and wrong reactions. It is forgotten, however, by those who advance this argument, that war is not only a consequence of evil passions or misdirected energy, it is also a perpetuation of them. It is an abuse of language

¹ James Russell Lowell on “Fugitive Slaves.”

to speak of war as an inevitable consequence in the same sense in which, for instance, disease is the consequence of vice or a headache of dissipation, for war is not an automatic process following willy-nilly upon human sin : it is a deliberate act in which men will to engage, and it is no more a consequence of the passions which precede it than boxing the ears of a child is the consequence of a mother's irritation. A good mother does not allow her irritation to find vent in a hurtful and foolish way like that ; and likewise a Christian man can redirect and transform the passions of which he may have been guilty prior to the outbreak of war.

To argue otherwise is to involve ourselves in a fatal circle of ill-doing ; for in what situation are we not thus involved in what is miscalled a train of cause and consequence ? One falsehood certainly seems to justify another : then are we all to become confirmed liars ? Drunkenness is not an isolated act, but a consequence of many preceding acts ; so with adultery or any other breach of the moral code ; but no one zealous for the well-being of men argues that, in these respects, the chain of cause and consequence is binding upon the human will : rather, our task as Christians is, by repentance, to cut the entail of evil and so start a new train of cause and consequence which shall bring good and not ill. But if so in regard to personal morality, why not in regard to war ?

Many people are misled by what seems to them the impersonal aspect of war. It may be admitted that to act "redemptively" is the Christian way

in relationships which involve personal dealings ; but a large proportion of our normal activities are not on this plane : they are not concerned with the "redemption" of men, and are properly described from a moral point of view as neutral : as such they are neither Christian nor un-Christian. The purchase of a postage-stamp, for instance, from an employee whom we never saw before and may never meet again. It is, of course, true that many of the operations of war are equally impersonal, and it is therefore possible to argue that they have nothing to do with the authority of Christ. But, when our action affects the very life of our fellow-creatures so intimately and so disastrously as does our action in war, have we any right as Christians to act in this detached and impersonal way ? It is the old question : "Am I my brother's keeper ?" The purchase of a postage-stamp is in no way a violation of Christian relationship, and it does not stand athwart "redemptive" activity, if the occasion for such should arise. The common conscience of Christian men, however, condemns the deliberate purchase of "sweated goods," however impersonal the relationship between buyer and seller, because behind the impersonal transaction is the infliction of injury upon some person or persons unknown : we recognise there that impersonal contacts cannot cancel the Christian's responsibility. He may not be able to act in a directly "redemptive" way towards the victims of the social order ; but the authority of Christ bids him refrain from anything which intensifies the ill or gives it

sanction. The same principle applies in regard to the many impersonal operations of war : they none of them have the innocuous quality which belongs to the purchase of a postage-stamp ; but they are all of them accessory to a system which, in its methods and processes, is always a flagrant defiance of the authority of Christ.

Much of the hesitation which men feel in refusing the way of war arises from a fear of what may follow upon such refusal. It seems as though disaster, spiritual as well as physical, must necessarily ensue unless resistance be made to the assault of aggressive evil ; and hence it is said to be our duty to conserve the moral values, embodied in the State, by resisting the aggression which would destroy those values. Incidentally, such an argument ignores the fact that all moral values go by the board in the act of war ; and we therefore smite the very thing we desire to preserve whenever we resort to arms for the maintenance of moral values. Such values, indeed, can neither be destroyed nor maintained by physical weapons, but only as men are either false to them or faithful to them as the case may be. Spiritual things can be attacked or defended only by spiritual means. Was Christianity destroyed when Jesus was crucified ? Also it can be pointed out that this plea for armed defence for the maintenance of moral values postulates, not merely the necessity of resistance, but of *successful* resistance, which a recourse to war can never promise. Apart, however, from such an assumption, if the way and spirit of Jesus are to be our guide, such considera-

tions are, strictly speaking, an irrelevance. The result of speaking the truth seems in certain cases, and when judged by a narrow pragmatic test, to be disastrous; but all truth goes by the board if once it is admitted that falsehood is morally justified. As a matter of fact, the ultimate far-reaching effects of any human act can never be entirely foreseen; we have to act in faith, and as Christians our faith rests upon our knowledge of Jesus Christ. Christian morality is neither pragmatic nor utilitarian in the sense that we can try it out and judge it by its works. The acceptance of the Christian standard rests upon the faith that God, seeing the beginning and the end of every human deed as we cannot, and understanding the ultimate effects of every smallest act as no finite mind can do, yet deliberately chose the way of the Cross and rejected the way of the sword as the only effective way of combating the world's evil. In that faith therefore, since the way of War and the way of the Cross are antithetical, the Christian is called to repudiate the methods of the battle-field.

That the difficulties of the Christian position are many and serious is obvious enough; but every endeavour to find a Christian apologia for war fails if we keep the authority of Christ in the centre. When or under what provocation, or in what dilemma, or for what reasons, did Jesus ever allow His followers to depart from His redemptive method? Did He ever admit directly or by implication that the end justifies the means, or that Christian obligations are cancelled when a

Christian acts as the agent of a group? The burden of proof, therefore, lies with those who justify war in the name of Christ, and not with those who condemn it. For Pacifism after all is but one application of the Gospel method; it is Christ's way of meeting evil, applied to the supreme evil of international conflict. If Christianity must be qualified or jettisoned in favour of war, it is not a gospel of redemption but only a second-best. But if when war comes Christianity can meet embattled and organised evil by pointing a better way, then—though the Church which bears the Christian witness may be crucified and martyred—the way of Jesus Christ will stand before the world as verily in every emergency “the Power of God unto Salvation.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN A WORLD ORGANISED FOR WAR

MAN has been described as a "gregarious animal," and that native and God-ordained fact lies at the basis of all human association, whether in the nation, in the Church, in commercial or cultural organisations, or in any other department of human life. The State is the nation organised for political purposes, and it exists in order to give effect to the right ordering of human life. In this sense the Apostle Paul, speaking of the Roman imperium, declares that "the powers that be are ordained of God"; though it is to be noted that not many years later, when those powers had begun to persecute the Christians, they were referred to in the Book of the Revelation in anything but divine terms: to the writer of that book, indeed, the Roman State was the "harlot" and the Emperor was the "beast." The distinctive character of the State lies in its power to enforce its authority, and herein it differs from the other associations of human life with which we are familiar. The Church or the Trade Union may excommunicate, but under modern conditions the power to coerce belongs only to the State; and it is when that power is exercised,

not upon its own citizens but towards another state, that we have a condition of war. The League of Nations is, in effect, a super-state within limits which it is hoped will ultimately become world-wide; and it is inevitable that, in the course of political development, the sovereign state as we know it will surrender its right to make war in favour of the judicial and legislative authority of the League. In the meantime, however, the Christian man, as has been pointed out in the previous chapter, may find that as a citizen of an earthly state organised for war he is called to do that which violates his duty as a Churchman or as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

How, then, in such circumstances shall he make his Christian witness? First, it has to be recognised that Christianity does not spell anarchy. If the State is not a divine institution in the old sense of the "divine right of kings," at least order and an organised social economy are a necessary condition of a full and free and disciplined Christian life; and therefore the Christian citizen will give his loyalty and support wherever possible to the authority of the government under which he lives. But there is a limit to such loyalty; and that limit is reached when obedience to the State clashes with fidelity to something that is greater: as Christians we are to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

This has been the principle upon which Christian men have acted all down the ages. An apt

statement of this principle was made by one of the ejected ministers under the Act of Uniformity in England in 1662, and his words are strictly relevant to the subject of this chapter : they were spoken by Robert Atkins in his farewell sermon from the pulpit of Exeter Cathedral : " Let him never be accounted a sound Christian who does not fear God and honour the king. I beg you will not interpret our nonconformity to be an act of unpeaceableness and disloyalty. We will do everything for His Majesty but sin : we will hazard everything for him but our souls : we hope we could die for him if the need arose, but we dare not and we will not be damned for him ! "

We to-day should not use the idiom of this seventeenth-century Christian ; but he puts his finger upon a salient consideration when he indicates that it is only with grave reluctance and with deep distress of soul that the Christian man can thus set himself in opposition to the demands of the State. This is especially so when the State itself is in danger from an enemy who is waging war ; for the call to arms is after all the world's way—and the only way the world knows—of meeting embattled evil ; and the Christian man therefore cannot be content with a mere negative which contracts out of the strife—even were that wholly possible—or which has no concern for the welfare of the State of which he is a citizen.

Then how is a Christian witness to be made in a world either actually at war, or organised for war, as are all the great nations of to-day ? What is

the Christian's alternative to war? Experience during the Great War showed how difficult it is, when once battle is joined, to find a positive way of serving the State apart from warlike activity or some occupation auxiliary to war: the power of the State practically prohibited every effort but that of the soldier and those who supplied his needs, and the universal motto was "Get on with the war."

The obvious alternative to settling an international dispute by fighting is to settle it by negotiation. This, however, is not an alternative which is at the disposal of the individual Christian. He may, of course, plead for such an alternative, and seek to influence public opinion in that direction; but the populace is not likely to respond to his appeal; for, inflamed by the passions which war engenders, the people generally regard the mere suggestion of negotiating with the enemy as disloyalty to their own country; while the statesmen, pledged by secret treaties to aims which can only be realised by victory, readily encourage this attitude of unreason. This was seen again and again during the Great War. The editor of the *Venturer*, for instance, in 1917, at Bow Street Police Court, in London, was fined £50 or, in default of payment, committed to gaol under a sentence of three months' hard labour, for the "crime" of criticising the British Government's refusal to negotiate at what seemed to be a favourable moment. The actual charge was laid under the Defence of the Realm Act as one of "prejudicing the discipline of His

Majesty's forces " ; but the issue in court was an article condemning the policy of His Majesty's Government ; for the Court held that the words used were " likely " to subvert the will to fight both among soldiers and civilians. In this and other ways political criticism was stifled ; printers were prosecuted or their machinery dismantled if they dared to print " peace literature " ; organisations which carried on propaganda for peace had their offices raided and their material seized ; and lessees of public halls were given to understand that it was inadvisable to let their premises for peace meetings. As a result the protagonists of " peace by negotiation " found themselves stultified and condemned to political impotence.

When it is borne in mind that war arises only after the breakdown of negotiations, it is not surprising that there should be popular impatience with a demand to substitute negotiation for fighting. Indeed, whatever may be the case as the conflict proceeds, it is true that at the outset of a war " peace by negotiation " is not practical politics ; and it is this inability to find a positive alternative to war which leads many Christian people to feel that their highest duty lies in a heavy-hearted and yet whole-hearted support of military operations, as the one and only way of registering their Christian abhorrence of, and reaction to, the aggressive evil which threatens the nation's life.

This dilemma still plays a large part in the support accorded to war and warlike preparations

by Christian people who love peace and seek it with passionate conviction: they do not justify war in its methods and processes as a Christian reaction to evil, but still less Christian is it to make no reaction at all; and so they challenge the out-and-out opponent of war to prescribe his Christian alternative—if he can!

Before endeavouring to meet this challenge, the demand itself must be scrutinised, and we must understand just what is implied by it. As generally presented, the demand means not that the individual Christian shall find some positive alternative to the activity of the soldier, but that he shall prescribe a definite and regimented alternative for all who are opposed to war. Thus during the Great War the conscientious objector was not, except in a few rare cases, allowed to continue in the vocation for which he had been trained or in which he had experience, and so serve his country by the faithful performance of a task for which he was fitted. The war-time temper insisted that since the soldier made a sacrifice, the man of peace must do the same. So if he was a schoolmaster, he was set to dig potatoes; if he was a professor of economics, he was told to dress wounds in an out-patient department of a civil hospital; if he was an agricultural labourer he was expected to break stones for road repairs; and if he felt that a Christian man ought to direct his own life under God, and not at the command of men, he was sent to prison and kept in solitary confinement for years on end, lest he should

contaminate a war-mad community by his fidelity to conscience.¹

But the very demand for a regimented alternative to soldiering reveals, not a Christian standpoint, but the trail of the military mind. There is regimentation for war—so runs the argument, implicitly if not explicitly—and therefore there ought to be regimentation for peace. So the Christian is challenged to show how, in time of war, citizens can be enrolled for national service in some civilian organisation, which shall thus provide a definite alternative to enrolment in the military forces; and if the opponent of war cannot meet this challenge his case is assumed to lack its final and convincing support.

It is to the very terms of this challenge however that objection must be taken on Christian grounds; for it is neither true to the genius of the Gospel nor to the facts of Christian experience to suggest, as this challenge does, that there is one specific and definite way in which an opponent of war should react to a national crisis. On the contrary, the glory of the Christian way is its freedom under the control of the Spirit of God: "the wind bloweth where it listeth . . . and so is every one that is born of the Spirit"; therefore, by the nature of the case, a stereotyped and regimented alternative to war is something which no man has a right to demand of

¹ Absurd as some of these instances seem, every one of them occurred as part of the normal treatment of conscientious objectors during the war. See *Conscription and Conscience*, by John W. Graham, for particulars.

another. There are, indeed—in regard to a national crisis, as in regard to every other—as many Christian reactions as there are Christian people: each one will make a different reaction because of his different outlook or circumstance, or his consciousness of the Divine leading for his particular life. All, therefore, that anyone has a right to demand of a professedly Christian man is that he shall live a Christian life to the extent of his power, and await the event and the opportunity in determining how his Christianity will find expression in a given crisis.

From the beginning of the Christian era it has been true that the world has never been able to predict how a Christian would act. It was so with Jesus Himself: men were continually baffled by the unexpected in Him: the Pharisees prescribed definite ways in which a religious man would act, but in the freedom of the Spirit Jesus ignored their narrow prescriptions and went His own way in obedience to the will of God. It has been the same with the followers of Jesus in every age, and it is still so to-day. Obedience to the will of God may on occasion demand an active and vigorous response to the assault of evil: it was so when Jesus retorted with vehemence to the “hypocrisy” of the Pharisees, or when He evaded the mob at Nazareth, or when in the Garden of Gethsemane He stood across the path of the armed guards in order that His disciples might go free. But equally, on occasion, obedience to the will of God may require quiescence in the face of aggressive evil: this was the case

when Jesus met the evil designs of Pharisees and Herodians by quietly moving across the Jordan, where He would be beyond the power of His persecutors; or most plainly of all, when He was silent before Herod, and unresisting in those last hours which took Him to the Cross. We must therefore not rule out as a possible Christian reaction in time of war a policy which *outwardly* may be described as "do nothing." "They also serve who only stand and wait"; and sometimes the self-restraint involved in such Christian quiescence is infinitely more difficult to achieve than the spontaneous vigour by which the "natural man" hits back, when he or those within his care are the victims of high-handed wrong.

Where the natural man misjudges Christian quiescence is in his assumption that it is a purely negative attitude, and that its practical effectiveness is nil. On such grounds the early Christian martyrs could be dismissed as negligible; for as Professor Sir William Ramsay has told us, "A little incense (on the altar of the Emperor) was nothing. An excellent and convincing argument could readily be worked out; and then the whole ritual of the State religion would have followed as a matter of course: Christ and Augustus would have been enthroned side by side . . . and everything which was vital to Christianity would have been lost."¹ Yet it is a commonplace to say that it was the quiet fidelity of the martyrs, even unto death, which won for us the Christian

¹ Sir William Ramsay, *Paul, the Traveller and Roman Citizen*.

privileges we possess to-day : no violent resistance to Roman persecution could have secured what their silent suffering effected. Then why is a quiet refusal to wage war at the behest of a modern state to be condemned as unworthy of a Christian man, when—as is generally the case in war-time—all avenues of positive or active testimony for peace are closed? It is at least obvious that, if such refusal were multiplied sufficiently, it would paralyse the arm of war; for fighting cannot be conducted if one side refuses to give battle! It is therefore not the pacifist who should be rebuked, but the fighter; for in these days—as our analysis of war has shown—prudence and patriotism are on the side of pacifism; and a policy of apparent “do nothing,” when war is declared, is the only way in which civilisation can be preserved from the utter disaster which modern weapons promise to a world which is un-Christian enough and foolish enough to fight.

The Christian position is sometimes met by the retort that, while a negative attitude may be justified when one's own safety is endangered, yet it can never be a Christian duty to stand idly by when the safety of others—and particularly that of the weak and the helpless—is menaced. But what if “do nothing” is a more effective defence than resistance? Under modern conditions that is always the case in war; for it is the merest make-believe to suggest that war ever can or does defend those whose safety we desire. It has been computed on a conservative

reckoning¹ that thirteen million civilians, of whom a vast number were women and children, died either by violence or by starvation as a result of the Great War; in addition there were five million war-widows and nine million orphans. By all the forecasts a "next war" will not stop even at these figures. It is time, therefore, that military-minded folk, who talk of the duty of "defence" and the necessity for a positive alternative to war, faced the realities of the situation instead of cherishing time-honoured illusions. To say, as was frequently said during the Great War, that a Christian man would not stand by, inert and helpless, while a bully assaulted a child, is to assume that such a situation is of the essence of war; but the assumption cannot be granted, for it is a false analogy. The practical dilemma of war lies in the fact that you cannot resist the "bully" except by killing the "child," or more truly, thirteen millions of him! To justify war, therefore, because it is a Christian duty to "defend" the weak is to be the victim of unthinking sentiment and is to work untold damage. The most obvious facts negative such a plea: in 1914, for instance, Antwerp was "defended," and therefore it suffered; but Brussels, for strategic reasons, was not defended, and in consequence its inhabitants were unharmed. Similarly throughout the battle area.

If, however, the Christian duty of "defence" is still pressed, let the following incident be con-

¹ *Direct and Indirect Costs of the Great World War*, by Prof. E. L. Bogart.

sidered. It was reported in the London *Times* early in the course of the Great War¹ that during the German advance through Belgium a party of Prussian cavalry scouts overtook a Belgian peasant, who, with his wife and three children, was flying towards France before the oncoming tide of war. The Prussians demanded certain information as to Belgian military dispositions, and as a civilian and a loyal subject of his king, the peasant refused to comply: whereupon the Prussian officer threatened that, unless the information were forthcoming, the man's wife and children would be lined up and shot. Will those who declare that it is always a Christian's first duty to defend the weak say what that peasant ought to have done? The *Times* praised his patriotism in sacrificing his wife and children, and in then himself paying the extreme price of loyalty to king and country. Thus, even on the plane of military ethics, occasions may arise when to "do nothing" is the highest expediency, and the obvious line of honour and of duty, even though it expose the helpless to violence and death.

In the same way, then, the Christian has a King whose will and way take precedence of the demands of every earthly monarch; and if, in supreme loyalty to that King, he must at times "do nothing" and seem to be heedless of those whom he ought to defend, he is nevertheless thereby

¹ The exact reference cannot be traced, but whether the incident was fact or only propaganda, no one will question the possibility of such happenings in war, and its value as an illustration does not depend upon its historicity.

taking the only course that is consistent with his pledged obedience to the authority of Christ.

It is not to be concluded from this, however, that the Christian man is shut up to the impotence of a purely negative witness in face of the international situations which threaten to issue in war. On the contrary, his very refusal to engage in war, though it often adds to the embitterment of those who do not understand it, focuses attention upon the fundamental opposition between the authority of Christ and the way of battle, and thereby renders a positive service. Altogether, there were some fifteen thousand conscientious objectors under the Military Service Acts in Great Britain during the Great War: it is not suggested that they all took their stand on Christian grounds: far from it: the spirit and attitude of some was an exact reflection of the temper of war, and was a reproach and a hindrance to the cause of peace. But there are black sheep in every flock, and for purposes of discussion we must take both the soldier and the pacifist at his best. When every discount then has been made, it remains true that the apparently futile and negative witness of the conscientious objector struck the imagination of the world far more deeply than seemed possible at the time; and the effect of the witness is to-day registered in the international "No More War Movement," which owes its initiation and continuing stimulus to the men of Great Britain who, even in the midst of war, believed in the possibility of peace, and therefore refused to belie their faith by resort to

arms. To be committed to prison instead of to the battle front seemed to the world of 1914-18 to be an inglorious response to the nation's need; and the men who languished in solitary confinement earned a contempt and a hatred from their fellow-countrymen which was often more intense than that bestowed upon the "enemy." But to-day they have their reward in the growing recognition of the truth for which they stood: for thinking men everywhere are coming to see that the real enemy in war is not the army of the foe, but the belief—shared by friend and foe alike—that war falls within the sanctions of civilisation or even of Christianity. Every man and woman, therefore, who rejects that belief, and expresses his rejection in a refusal to assist the processes of war, is playing his part far more effectively than any soldier in the real and lasting defence of his country against the enemy of mankind. If this were realised by those who complain of the "negative" attitude of the pacifist, they would not be so prone to feel that when war "lets hell loose" upon the world, the Christian's duty is to intensify that hell by his own participation. As well say that when everybody gets drunk I must get drunk too!

While maintaining his refusal to fight, however, the Christian citizen will not ignore or neglect the opportunities for the maintenance of international peace which exist to-day in the realm of practical politics. For, even on the plane of world-affairs, it is possible to find a better way than war; and increasingly the world is being

organised in the interests of peace. The League of Nations, treaties for the "outlawry of war," agreements to arbitrate, processes of law before the World Court of international judicature—all these and similar movements are building up an order of things in the realm of world-politics where an appeal to arms is less and less likely. The best of political instruments, however, envisages war as a final resort in case of stubborn dispute: the Covenant of the League of Nations has its Article 16, with an ultimate reliance upon armed sanctions: treaties for the outlawry of war only ban war "as an instrument of national policy," and they leave "defensive war" still among the legitimacies of civilised life: even arbitral agreements may need to be "enforced" by war. The Christian man, therefore, cannot regard these political instruments as a substitute for a personal witness against war: they are of great value and significance in a world where armaments are still the chief burden of civilisation, and they can therefore be welcomed and supported as a long step in the direction of world-peace. But when all is said and done, political safeguards are impotent to prevent war, so long as good men continue to believe that it is right on occasion to deal with delicate international situations by brute force, with all its accompanying barbarities and immoralities.

The Christian witness therefore—in spite of its seeming impotence—is one of the most vital assets for peace in a world still organised for war. For it is only when the way of war is renounced as

the deadliest of all sins—because it includes every sin in the catalogue of vice—that battle will become as obsolete as the duel, and armaments will rust because of desuetude, and soldiering will be transformed into a picturesque pageantry of state, as harmless and as interesting as the Beef-eaters in the Tower of London or the Swiss Guard which waits upon the Pope. That day is anticipated by every Christian man and woman who “outlaws war” from his or her own life, and who accepts instead the sovereign authority of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IX

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH FOR WORLD-PEACE

SINCE the close of the Great War an increasing number of resolutions in favour of peace, disarmament, the League of Nations, and similar subjects, have been enthusiastically adopted by ecclesiastical assemblies. There is no doubt that the Churches have awaked to the need of persistent emphasis on the side of peace: they believe in it and are prepared to work for it; but there is one qualification often explicit in the resolutions, and nearly always implicit. That qualification can be expressed in the current phrase "safety first"! Indeed, it is not cynicism but sober fact to say that much of the enthusiasm for the League of Nations is due to the fact that it does not ask the signatory Powers to take any risks! "Peace with security" is the popular slogan! So the League must have its forcible sanctions, disarmament must be gradual and all together, peace by all means so long as nobody wants to fight!

Such an attitude is comprehensible in the realm of statecraft—traditionally noted for its pride in *real-politik*—but the Church can share this passion for "security" only if she loses sight of the sublime and supreme risk implicit in a Gospel

with a Cross at its centre. On the human side, the thing that impresses the Gospel reader most is the sheer recklessness of Jesus in fidelity to the will of God; and until the Church will carry that attitude into her plea for world-peace, she has not on this issue caught the spirit of her Master: He risked everything—friendship, the esteem of men, His own life, and, hardest of all, the safety of those He loved—rather than descend to methods incongruous with the Divine Love; and something of the same kind of daring is required on the part of the Church if she is to redeem humanity from “the world’s greatest collective sin.” For the issue rests with the Church rather than with statesmanship in the last analysis. The frenzied and unscrupulous efforts during the Great War¹ to enlist the support of the Churches was evidence enough of the value which statesmen attach to organised Christianity in time of national crisis: it was, in fact, the biggest single factor in maintaining the war-morale of the nation, for it enabled the public to think of the struggle as a “holy war” and a crusade in which it was a Christian virtue to engage.

This very fact, however, lays upon the Church her most solemn responsibility in this matter. Let the Church but withdraw her endorsement of war in as thoroughgoing and absolute a fashion as she would refuse to approve slavery, and the world’s statesmanship would speedily discover

¹ The British and American War Departments not only used eloquent clerics as official propagandists, but sermons were prepared by war-office clerks and circulated for use in the pulpit.

other and better ways of dealing with international dispute than by the customary threat of armed force. It is not, of course, that statesmen desire war, or, as a rule, even threaten it openly; but diplomatic negotiations are carried on with the consciousness that armaments are in the background and to be used in case of necessity. It is primarily a psychological situation; for the awareness of a possible appeal to war gives to diplomatic interchange a strained and anxious quality which does not belong to other relationships from which force is absent. Yet it lies within the power of the Church to change the psychology of statecraft by the single device of excommunicating war and all its works from her borders as something alien to the authority of Christ. By this is meant not merely resolutions in favour of peace, but a refusal to be used in any way by the war machine. Chaplains would disappear from the army and navy,¹ and Church parades by drilled troops would be discarded as a relic of paganism—unless, indeed, the authorities were prepared to allow Christ's Gospel of Peace to have free course among the soldiers! To appreciate the insuperable difficulties of war-office padres in preaching the Gospel of Christ without treason to the State, one can turn to C. E. Montague's *Disenchantment*: in every case

¹ That is, chaplains holding military or naval commissions and therefore sworn to military obedience. Voluntary chaplaincies with entire liberty to obey the authority of Christ in ministering to the forces would be permissible to the Church, though hardly likely to be permitted by the army!

it was the Gospel that suffered and not the State-at-war, for it was hardly possible to tell a company going into a bayonet charge to "love their enemies" or to be crucified on behalf of the foe! So, too, the Church would encourage and stand by her young men who, in the name of Christ, refused to obey the call to war;¹ and above all, she would refuse to break the unity of the Christian fellowship at the behest of political expediency, by dividing men and peoples into arbitrary categories of friend and foe. War is possible because statesmen can rely upon the peoples to accept certain others as their official "enemies"; but let it be known that the Church will never acquiesce in this mechanical and wholesale breach of fellowship, and she would go far to paralyse the hand of war.² Indeed, if there

¹ Christian parents can take a stand forthwith by disallowing the enrolment of their sons in the Officers' Training Corps now established in so many of our schools: by such refusal a sentiment would speedily be created which would rob the O.T.C.'s of their social prestige.

² There are some who would go further than this and require of Christian citizens the refusal of war-taxation, just as they would require the refusal of military service. There is, however, a distinction to be observed here between property and personality; for the one can be seized and appropriated by Government, whatever its possessor may desire, while the other can never be coerced so long as it is willing to suffer the disabilities, or worse, which a government may inflict. The payment of taxes falls in the first category, and the rendering of military service in the other: no government can compel me to shoulder a rifle or to use my labour in military preparations; but no power of mine can prevent a government from seizing my goods or raiding my bank account for the maintenance of armaments. When, therefore, I draw a cheque and hand it

should ever be a "next war," the prime responsibility for the calamity will rest with the Christian Church because she did not—while yet there was time—give due warning to the world that the professed disciples of the Prince of Peace could never again be inveigled into battle. Such an attitude would doubtless bring the Church under the ban of States organised for war, and members of her fellowship, as once with the Church's Head, under the charge of high treason. But how can the unity of Christendom ever be asserted as more than a pious unmeaning dogma, except it be asserted in the teeth of political prohibitions? The Church which is faithful to her Lord can make no terms with the mass-enmities which jeopardise her own spiritual unity with Christ's disciples everywhere. In 1914, the Churches generally were taken unprepared: it was an entirely fresh issue for the majority of Christian people, and the seeming dilemma of a choice between two evils led pulpit and pew alike, for the most part, to go with the tide of popular feeling: there was no attempt or even desire to stem the tide, and the Church found herself in the impotent and humiliating position of merely saying "Amen" to the speeches of the statesmen. This happened in every country which entered

to the tax-collector I am merely recognising the plain fact that I cannot control my property as I can my personality. The question of war-taxation, however, is one of the many border-line problems of Christian ethics, and in no wise affects the main issue. It has been observed that Jesus paid taxes, and yet no one would say that He endorsed Roman militarism.

the war. But to-day we have had an opportunity, as we had not then, of knowing something of the nature of war ; and by sober reflection the Church has been able, if she would, to test the processes and methods of war by the authority of Christ. She knows to-day, as she did not in 1914, that to take the way of war is not to take the way of Christ.

But it is not only that the Church is called to excommunicate war and all its works. She has a positive and constructive witness to make ; for as the custodian of the Faith, the only organisation which exists for the definite purpose of conserving and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ, she offers to the world an alternative to war which not only seeks to meet the assault of evil and defeat it, but which has in it the power to disarm the evil will and even change it into good. We delude ourselves, however, if we imagine that this can be done easily or cheaply. On the contrary, like war it involves a readiness to endure sacrifice, though unlike war it never inflicts sacrifice upon the enemy. It is strange, when one contemplates it, how willing even Christian people are to pay the appalling price of war, and yet how loth they often are to pay the price of peace. They desire peace, of course, for it is an integral part of the Christian ideal of world-fellowship ; but they shrink from its cost. The kingdoms of the world receive their uttermost devotion, while the Empire of Christ is served with reservations.

This half-heartedness for peace is partly due to the fact that the intimate relation between peace

and policy is so rarely grasped. We tend to think of war as a sudden attack, sprung upon an in-offensive nation out of the blue; but behind every modern war there lies a whole history of irritations and provocations and counter-provocations which finally issue in conflict. It is true to say, therefore, that the "next war" is being either prepared for or prevented even now; and part of the cost of peace is a willingness, before any conflict is in prospect, to renounce those national ambitions, that patriotic pride, and especially that economic pressure, which pushes governments into aggressive policies. There is a fatal confusion of thought in the common talk about the defence of one's country: for what needs defence is not the country but the country's policy. It was, for instance, the policy of ruthless economic expansion—coupled, of course, with nationalistic ambition—which made it necessary in the early years of the twentieth century to "defend" Germany with a big navy and a bigger army; but it was precisely this policy which provoked the fear and the envy of neighbours likewise bent on economic enterprise, until at last out of the mutual provocation there came the explosion of the Great War. No one who has studied the diplomatic and commercial history prior to the war will subscribe to the dogma that Germany was the *sole* party responsible: the German Government may have precipitated the actual clash of arms, but the situation which made it possible had grown out of the whole system of European statecraft for twenty years prior to

1914. Mr Lloyd George recognised this in 1908 when he said: "I want our friends who think that . . . Germany is a little frightened . . . to remember that she is frightened for a reason which would frighten us under similar circumstances."

Part of the price of peace, therefore, is a willingness to accept—or better still, a definite effort to procure—a change of national policy. The writer is an Englishman, and he will therefore confine himself to that aspect of the matter which primarily concerns the British Empire. It is true that the average peace-loving Englishman rarely suspects that anything needs amendment in the foreign policy of his country: crises arise from time to time, and then it may be that the ways of statesmen and diplomats—and even financiers and traders—need to be scrutinised. But for the most part the Englishman (and presumably the citizens of every other country would say the same of their own policies) rests in the conviction that the Union Jack stands for freedom and justice and fair play and an entire absence of aggression. In this he is often right, as the history of British imperial administration clearly shows. But suppose the observer looks at the British Empire, not first as an Englishman but as a Christian. The self-governing portions of the Empire, the great Dominions, are none of his responsibility: but what of the still unfree parts of the Empire, not yet ready for or capable of self-government? Is it not true to say that the mere fact of Empire, however generously governed, is becoming more and more obnoxious to subject

peoples? Periodic outbreaks of what is euphemistically called "unrest" bespeak the fact that, despite all our best intentions, Imperial policy is often irritating and provocative; and it is this kind of thing which requires the maintenance of armaments and which at any time may flare up into international conflict, as it has done more than once in British history. We need therefore—as part of the price of peace—to challenge the accepted assumptions upon which the fact of Empire rests. But it is precisely the sacrifice of those assumptions which we are most of us unwilling to make; and so while we desire peace, we unconsciously perpetuate the conditions which may provoke war.

To be explicit, let the following suggestions be made to any average company of Christian people, and note the reaction. Let it be suggested, for instance, that the idea of Empire, which spells the government and control of one people by another, has in these days, on account of the existence of the League of Nations, lost the justification which once it had in a world of conflicting and co-equal sovereignties. That is to say, so long as no supernational authority existed, a plausible case could be made for "benevolent imperialism" (the sort of thing that Mr Kipling had in mind when he spoke of the "white man's burden"), the discharge of a trusteeship for weaker and less civilised races.

But to-day an obvious method of discharging the trusteeship of the white races in a spirit of disinterested service lies right to our hand; and

it consists in the transfer of the administration of all the non-self-governing territories in the British and every other Empire to the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. With this would go the creation of an international Civil Service under the auspices of the League. This may not be practical politics at the moment ; but it is an idea which, if cherished and fostered, must finally win the moral assent of the peoples, whether they govern or be governed. In the first instance, Britain would naturally be the mandatory power in all those territories where her flag now flies ; but the transfer to the League of Nations would make this vast difference, that the native populations who are now under the sole control of their imperial governors, and have no say in the method of government, would then have an appeal from Downing Street to Geneva.

The writer has tried this proposal upon more than one Christian assembly, and it is obvious that the mere suggestion that the British Empire is not sacrosanct and inviolable touches patriotic and imperialistic sentiment on the raw. The same is true if it be suggested that it is not within the moral competence of any one nation to control, as Great Britain does, the strategic waterways of the world by means of a chain of fortified posts and naval bases, from Gibraltar in the west to Singapore in the east ; and that, therefore, from a Christian point of view these posts should be dismantled, and either handed back to the countries from which they were originally seized, or, if this be impracticable

because of subsequent political changes, placed under the ægis of the League of Nations.

It needs to be insisted that the price of peace from this point of view is chiefly psychological. If, as Christian people affirm, peace is an intrinsic element in a Christianised world, are they prepared, for the sake of that ideal and to prevent the recurrence of war, to stand for a qualified national sovereignty, to subordinate patriotic pride to human welfare, to renounce the status of a "Great Power" (where greatness means mere weight of gun metal), and even, if need be, to suffer injustice and ignominy and damage to the national interests, rather than be parties to that betrayal of Christ which is always involved in war? It is not suggested that any of the nations as they are should or could, through their existing governments, adopt a policy of this kind: governments are, in general, a reflection of the moral standards of the people they govern; and no people living on a sub-Christian level can rightly be expected to do the Christian thing. Christianity cannot be expressed in terms of even the most idealistic code of ethical or political conduct: it is a way of life which comes from a vital and spontaneous reaction to the authority of Christ. All that is being urged, therefore, is that Christian people—who, when organised as a Christian society, are the Church—should let it be known that they are willing to pay this psychological price of peace, and so make governments aware that anything less will fail to secure the endorsement of the Christian Church. Politically, it is

true, the ordinary citizen seems helpless in affecting questions of "high politics," and the affairs of Empire seem altogether beyond his reach; yet that vague ill-defined thing called "public opinion" is made up, not of those who are heedless and indifferent to great issues, but of those units in the community who know their own mind and who must therefore be reckoned with in the things of practical politics. In this sense, the issues of war and peace rest in the last analysis not with the world's statesmen, but with the members of the Christian Church in their obedience to the authority of Christ.

The Church, however, need not wait upon political persuasion before she makes effective her Christian reaction to aggressive and embattled evil; for the real alternative to the military way is the missionary way; and again and again the weaponless retort of a Christian life—and often of a Christian death—has proved more potent than the weapons of a sub-Christian world-order. This was the way in which Livingstone assaulted "darkest Africa": Boniface, in the eighth century, had a better idea of defeating "the Huns" than did the Allies in 1914: so too, in the seventeenth century, William Penn showed how, in the absence of armed defence, a Christian spirit could destroy the hostility of bloodthirsty savages in Pennsylvania; in every contiguous colony "protected" by force of arms, rapine and fire and atrocity made life precarious: for seventy-two years the contrast lasted until the Quakers were outnumbered by immigrants, who insisted on a

militia, and promptly one of the worst massacres in colonial history occurred on Pennsylvania soil ! Yet the world, in its madness, refused to learn ! In this twentieth century Theodore Pennell, travelling unarmed with his medicine-chest about the Indian north-west frontier, was acclaimed by a high military authority, charged with the defence of the Peshawar district, as "worth more than a couple of British regiments" to the peace of India !

At the present moment an interesting and significant illustration of the Christian alternative to war may be found in the Near East. For more than eight centuries that region has been marked by an unending sequence of violence, in the endeavour to tranquillise the relationship of Christendom to the Moslem world ; but all without avail. The military method has consistently failed to compel the Turk to good behaviour, ever since Peter the Hermit summoned Christian Europe to the first Crusade in the year 1094. But now comes the missionary method. In the spring of 1924, the little colonies of Tel-Samen and Tel-Armen were established on the borders of Turkish Armenia by a group of Christian people, and the attempt has been made to induce Moslem and Christian, embittered by age-long antagonisms, to live and work side by side in agricultural and industrial co-partnership rather than in conflict. There, under European (chiefly Swedish) Christian leadership, and with the goodwill of the local Turkish overlord, but *entirely without military protection*, some hundreds of

Armenian peasants have organised a settlement together with their Turkish neighbours. The Moslem of the Near East, for eight hundred years, has been led by Christian Europe to think of Christianity in terms of bloodshed, and his enmity was fed and nurtured accordingly; but now in these little colonies he sees what the Christian method really is, when applied to living problems by consecrated men and women; and in a few short years his enmity departs. As a politico-economic venture Tel-Samen and Tel-Armen are significant; but it is as a spiritual venture that they are chiefly important; for the Church has but to multiply this type of Christian enterprise in order to stamp out for ever the régime of inter-racial strife, and inaugurate instead the reign of perpetual peace. In the endorsement, therefore, of the Church's missionary enterprise, and in the encouragement of it by our substance and our service, is to be found the Christian's alternative to war.¹ If the Church would but call her young men and women to enlist by their thousands in redemptive ventures of this kind, and then equip them and support them in the doing of it, she would never again suffer the reproach of urging them on to war.

∖ In this matter of war and peace, the Church must cease to be ambiguous or else forfeit all claim to moral leadership. It is easy to plead many

¹ It is a welcome sign of advance that the World Missionary Council, meeting at Jerusalem in 1928, urged "all missionary societies that they should make no claim on their Governments for the armed defence of their missionaries and their property."

plausible reasons against reliance upon the Christian way when an emergency arises, and no follower of Jesus Christ, conscious of his own weakness, will venture to judge a brother who fails to stand fast by the faith in this or in any other respect. But it remains true that if the Christian way is, as we believe, God's way for the world, then it is only by fidelity to that way that men can ever expect the endorsement of heaven. Until, therefore, the Church refuses to sanction the methods of the battle-field under any circumstances or for any purpose, however lofty or plausible, she can never speak with a voice that will command either the approval of God or the response of men. The Church professes that the Gospel of Jesus Christ holds a solution of every problem which arises from the clash of good and evil: the Gospel is thus God's "good news" to a sinful world. But obviously, if in time of crisis that Gospel must give way to the brutality of armed conflict, then it is not "good news" but merely a "sounding gong and a clanging cymbal." Why should the world listen to the Church in regard to other issues when, in regard to this supreme issue, she speaks with an uncertain voice and in hesitating and even conflicting accents?

The nineteenth century saw the end of chattel-slavery in the civilised world because the conscience of Christian men condemned it; and the same may be true in the twentieth century in this matter of international war. But all depends upon the Church and her fidelity to the authority of Christ. Meantime, the world is burdened by

its weight of armaments, and civilisation lives under the constant threat of destruction, just because the Church is hesitant and uncertain. Only one thing will avail: the Christian passion which led a David Livingstone to war against the slave-trade must inspire all Christian people to war against war. No prayer, therefore, can befit us better in that crusade than the dying words of Livingstone himself, now inscribed upon his tomb in Westminster Abbey: "May Heaven's rich blessing come down on everyone—American, English, Turk—who will help to heal this open sore of the world."

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